

# MINOR POEMS

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*by* **MILTON**

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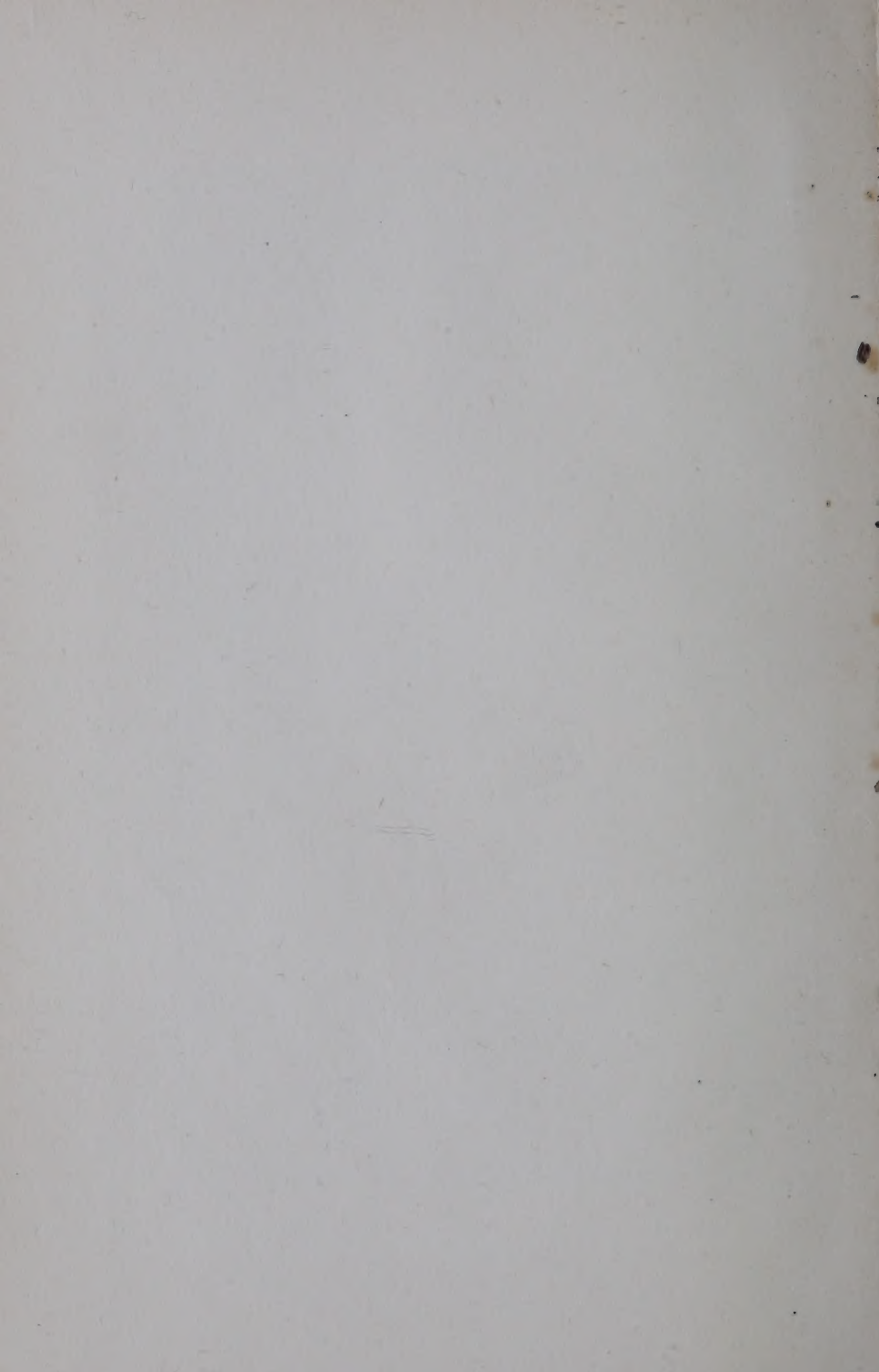
*Edited by A.P. Walker*





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SELECT  
MINOR POEMS  
OF JOHN MILTON

HYMN ON THE NATIVITY  
L'ALLEGRO  
IL PENSEROSO  
COMUS  
LYCIDAS  
SONNETS

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, ETC., BY

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## PREFACE.

THE form of this book has been determined by the same considerations which influenced me in the preparation of my volume of *Selections from Paradise Lost*. I had learned from my observation of nearly two thousand pupils in literature that Milton's erudition makes it impossible for pupils of secondary school age to read his works intelligently without a definite preparation, through the study of certain conceptions with which he, in common with all the educated classes of his time, was perfectly familiar. Among these were the conceptions in regard to physical science which prevailed during the Middle Ages, the myths which are found in the Greek and Roman classics, and the religious dogmas held by the Christian world in the seventeenth century. I believe that that method of editing Milton's works which compels pupils to acquire a knowledge of these conceptions piecemeal, through the process of referring to isolated notes, is pedagogically indefensible if the pupils are supposed to be studying the works for their educational value as examples of good literature, both because this method creates faulty conceptions of the true method

and purpose of literary study, and because it runs counter to the principle that knowledge, to be useful, must consist of a body of logically related facts. In a word, I believe that pupils should be enabled and induced to equip themselves as thoroughly as possible for reading any poem *before* they enter upon the study of the text, and that they should not be led to degrade a noble poem to the level of a catalogue of bits of recondite information to be laboriously acquired through notes or works of reference.

I have, therefore, condensed, for this volume, the Historical Introduction to my volume of *Selections from Paradise Lost* by omitting all the portions not necessary to the interpretation of the poems here included, and have added a general Introduction to the Minor Poems and also a special Introduction to each poem, together with critical notes, which aim to direct attention to the poems as literary productions. The various Introductions should be studied with some care, as a preparation for the study of certain classes of literature. Then the poems should be made the object of study, the references to the Historical Introduction and the Glossary being used only when the failure of the pupil's memory renders it necessary.

ALBERT PERRY WALKER.

BOSTON, August, 1900.



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## WORKS FOR REFERENCE.



### CHIEFLY BIOGRAPHICAL.

#### Life of Milton.

1. By David Masson. (6 vols., Macmillan.) An exhaustive work, useful for the investigation of special topics.
2. By Mark Pattison. *English Men of Letters Series.* (Harpers.)
3. By Richard Garnett. (Scribner.)
4. By Stopford A. Brooke. *Classical Writers Series.* (Appleton.) These works, each in one volume, set forth the facts of Milton's life, especially as related to his literary work; but they aim chiefly at a critical discussion of the character and value of that work as judged by modern standards of literary criticism.
5. By Samuel Johnson. In *Lives of the English Poets.* Similar in aim to 2, 3, and 4; but it applies the standards of a formal and conventional school of criticism, now obsolete, and it is further invalidated by the expression of numerous purely personal judgments upon many matters in regard to which Johnson was not a competent critic. Useful for comparative study only.

**Poetical Works of John Milton.** (3 vols., Macmillan.) The *Introduction* contains biographical and critical matter of great value, an especial feature being an elaborate study (not entirely trustworthy) of Milton's versification.

See also Milton's Youth in Masson's *Essays* (see page xiv).

## CHIEFLY CRITICAL.

**1. A Critique on Paradise Lost.**

By Joseph Addison. (Reprinted from *The Spectator*.)

**2. Essays on Milton.**

*a.* By Matthew Arnold. In *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series.

*b.* By Walter Bagehot. In *Literary Studies*, Vol. I.

*c.* By A. Birrell. In *Obiter Dicta*, Second Series.

*d.* By Edward Dowden. In *Transcripts and Studies*.

*e.* By James Russell Lowell. In *Among My Books; or, Prose Works*, Vol. IV.

*f.* By Thomas Babington Macaulay. In *Essays*, Vol. I.

*g.* By E. Schérer. In *Essays* (translated by G. Saintsbury).

**3. Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton.** By Samuel Taylor Coleridge.**4. Remarks on the Character and Writings of John Milton.**  
By William Ellery Channing.

## GENERAL.

*History of English Literature.* Arnold. (The Elegy, p. 443 f.)

*History of English Literature.* Brooke. (Ch. V.)

*History of the Literature of Europe.* Hallam. (Pt. IV., Ch. V.)

*Lectures on the English Poets.* Hazlitt.

*Essays, chiefly on the English Poets.* Masson.

*Introduction to English Literature.* Pancoast. (Ch. II.)

*Lectures on the British Poets.* Read.

*The Poetical Interpretation of Nature.* Shairp.

## BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

### OF MILTON'S LIFE AS RELATED TO HIS LITERARY WORK.

- 1608 He was born in London of refined and well-to-do parents, whose ambition destined him from childhood to the pursuit of literature. Accordingly from the year
- 1616 He was educated both at school and with private tutors at home, studying languages and philosophy.
- 1625 He entered the University of Cambridge, where he remained for seven years and received the usual degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts, also winning special honors. (1629, *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.)
- 1632 He went to reside with his father in the village of Horton, and occupied himself for five years in the perusal of the great literary works in all languages, in the study of mathematics and music, and in the production of various minor poetical compositions. (*L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, *Lycidas*.) His walks about this pleasant country village, together with his previous rambles about Cambridge, undoubtedly developed in him that delight in the simple and cheerful aspects of rural life which is manifested throughout his shorter poems.
- 1638 He travelled abroad, visiting Paris and the principal Italian cities, seeking converse with persons of distinguished attainment, indulging his taste for literature, and collecting a library for future reading and

study. During this time he visited Florence and Naples.

- 1639 He returned to England because he heard of the commotions in that country which later led to the Civil War. "For I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home."
- 1640 He settled in London, resuming his literary pursuits, and teaching a few private pupils. During the succeeding years he wrote much in defence of the People's cause, in the quarrels between King and Parliament.
- 1649 He was made Latin Secretary under the government of the Commonwealth, and continued his writings against the enemies of that government.
- 1650 He became blind in one eye. Persisting in his labors as Secretary, in
- 1653 He became totally blind. After the Restoration in
- 1660 He passed into obscurity, and prosecuted his long-delayed work on *Paradise Lost*.
- 1667 He published *Paradise Lost*.
- 1671 He published *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.
- 1674 He died.



## INTRODUCTION.

#### NOTE.

Throughout this book, references by numbers alone relate to the numbered paragraphs of the matter treating of the characteristic ideas of Milton's time, which is found on pages 16 to 44 inclusive.

# INTRODUCTION.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF POETRY.

IN every work of art the indispensable requisite is *harmony*, a quality which may be manifested in the relation of subject to form and treatment, and of each part to the whole. Poetry is characterized by the blending of at least three special elements, in the mutual relations of which harmony must be exhibited: the *subject* of poetry must be of a character worthy of artistic expression, the *treatment* must be imaginative, the *form* must be rhythmical. Besides these general features, each poem has an individual *structure*, partly the result of the free choice of the author, partly determined by the nature of the subject and the purpose of the composition. Subject, purpose, structure, and rhythmic form determine the *class* to which the poem belongs, and this in some degree determines its *style* and appropriate method of treatment. The student who learns to observe these elements in a poem thereby enhances his enjoyment, while developing his power of judgment and acquiring a correct taste in literature.

He must therefore train himself to observe the *general subject* of treatment in any work or passage, the *immediate subject* under discussion, and its *relation* to the general one. He must note the *order* in which the minor subjects succeed one another, and the logical basis of that order.

One result of this training is to develop the faculty of attention, and thereby to enable the memory to retain what has been read, and to reproduce it with fulness and clearness. Speaking broadly, we may say that this training gives mastery over the *matter* and over the *structure* of a poem. A second result is to form correct mental habits in the pupil, through the force of conscious or unconscious imitation. The writers of great literature are persons whose

mental powers are especially orderly in their operation. The pupil who habitually observes the above-mentioned features of their work and exercises himself in reproducing their thought in similarly logical arrangement cannot fail to find his own processes of thought more accurate and more orderly.

The work of great writers is not only orderly in thought ; it is also *effectively* expressed. One great means of effectiveness in expression consists in the skilful use of variety, or *contrast*. Successive portions of a poem must vary in treatment, and the student must learn to notice the transition and judge whether it be abrupt or unobtrusive. But the chief aim must be to learn to recognize that vital element of good writing which is called *style*. The more obvious elements of style are the kind and quantity of ornamentation, the character of the words selected, and the prevailing type of sentence structure and word arrangement. The quintessence of style, however, resides not in these externals, but in a subtle harmony of thought and expression pervading an entire work ; a quality which is not discoverable by analysis, but must be recognized through its effect upon the æsthetic faculty. The power to perceive the presence of this quality may best be developed by the repeated reading of passages which manifest it in the highest degree. The pupil, therefore, must listen ever as he reads for the harmonies of line with line ; of form with content ; and of all with the theme, and with the purpose of the author. The results of this training are to increase his ability to enjoy, to quicken his power of discrimination, and ultimately to refine his nature.

In his use of ornament Milton exhibits marked peculiarities. His work deals with scenes and persons that are in a sense the creations of his own brain. To make clear to the reader these imaginative conceptions he would necessarily rely upon abundant illustrations ("similes") drawn from human experience ; and as his own experience lay much in the world of books, we find these similes to be based rather upon the fabled experiences of the heroes of ancient and mediæval literature than upon those of daily life. In them he imitates Homer and Virgil, who were fond of elaborating their illustrations with an abundance of picturesque detail, but Milton is often superior to them in the appositeness of these details to the main thought.

We have applied to a formal illustration the name *Simile*.



There are a few other kinds of poetic adornment the importance of which necessitates some special study of them by the pupil. First in order is the *Metaphor*, in which the poet applies to some object of thought the name of another object of thought which resembles it in some especial manner. His purpose in using the figure is to please by the beauty of the thought suggested, or to impress by the striking character of the resemblance indicated.

The second figure is *Synecdoche*. In this the underlying principle is that of substituting for the general name of an object of thought the name of some special portion of it, by which means the mental image is given more definite outlines than it would have if the name of the whole object were used. It is evident that the use of this ornament aids in securing condensation in the style.

A third kind of figurative expression is *Metonymy*. In this, as in the others, a substitution of names takes place, but the objects involved are related, not through resemblance or through partial identity, but through habitual association in thought. As such associations are very largely the result of special intellectual training, the figure is less intelligible to the general reader than either of the others previously mentioned. Milton, because of his great learning, is prone to use this figure. It is employed, like synecdoche, to please the mind by its rich suggestiveness, and by its appeals to man's inherent love for symbolism, but unless sparingly used it is likely to produce obscurity in the style.

The last kind of figurative adornment that we shall consider is the *Transferred Epithet*, a favorite ornament with Milton. In this figure, a descriptive word whose application is clearly evident from the context is transferred from its normal place in the sentence, and made to modify grammatically some word which it does not really qualify. This figure, like the others, lends condensation to the style, and reflection upon all four will make clear wherein lie the force and the beauty of imaginative expression,—

“Where more is meant than meets the ear.”

We have mentioned as elements of style *diction* and *sentence structure*. The student should train himself (1) to observe the character of the words habitually used by Milton, asking himself whether they are native to the English language or importations,

are learned or colloquial, are chosen for directness of import or for subtlety of suggestion, and (2) to note foreign idioms, unusual turns of expression, and inversions of the natural order of sentences. He thus gains in appreciation of how language may be made more expressive by art, and gains in that power over his fellow-men which comes from effective speech.

#### METRE.

As rhythmic form is the attribute which especially distinguishes poetry, it is necessary for the student to keep that element constantly within the sphere of his observation. The technical knowledge required for its appreciation is very limited in amount. In brief, it is necessary to know that rhythm is based on recurring stresses or accents in spoken words, and since certain groups of stressed and unstressed syllables bear special names for convenience of reference, it is also necessary to learn to recognize the leading groups by name. One of these groups is called a *poetic foot*, and a definite number of feet constituting a single line of poetry is called a *verse*. A poetic foot may be represented symbolically by using  $x$  to represent the unstressed, and  $a$  to represent the stressed syllables.

Verses are named from their predominating foot, and their normal number of feet. The feet most frequently used by English poets are the *Iambus*, consisting of an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable, and its counterpart in reverse, the *Trochee*. Next in importance come the *Anapæst*, consisting of two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable, and its counterpart in reverse, the *Dactyl*.

These four types are exemplified in the initial feet of the four following lines from *Comus* : —

Iambus, — Ěefore | the stár|ry threshold of Jove's court —

Trochee, — Swift às | the sparkle of a glancing star —

Anapæst, — The Āll-gív|ěr wôuld bé | unthanked, would be un-  
praised —

Dactyl, — Líke líest | and nearest to the present aid —

These four kinds of feet form the theoretical basis of all Milton's versification. Where he seems to use feet of two unstressed or of two equally stressed syllables, it is generally evident either that one

of the two is of predominant importance in the thought, or that it is followed by a natural pause in utterance which lends to it an artificial importance. The foot thus resolves itself into an iambus or a trochee.<sup>1</sup> For example, the last of the above-quoted lines from *Comus* ends with a prepositional phrase of four words, the first two of which are normally unstressed syllables, and rigid formalism would require us to pronounce the third foot in the line a "pyrrhic" (-ěst tŏ). The editor is convinced, however, that Milton considers the syllable *-est*, where a slight delay is inevitable before uttering the following phrase, to be "long by position," making the foot a trochee. The case is typical of hundreds in Milton's works.

Milton employs in his minor poems iambic dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, and hexameter. His favorite lyric form is iambic tetrameter, which he varies by very frequently omitting the initial (unaccented) syllable of the first foot. His favorite measure for more dignified work is iambic pentameter, which he varies by occasionally adding an extra (unaccented) syllable after the fifth foot. It must be noted that the verse is named from its predominating foot, but rarely does a verse contain nothing but this kind. Thus, while all four of the lines quoted above are normally of the 5 *x a* type, a trochee is substituted in the first foot of the second line, in order that the verse, like the "glancing star" that it describes may dart on its course with abruptness, and each of the other lines contains two substituted feet. The poet chooses a certain type of verse (*e.g.* 5 *x a*) as a basis of construction merely, and then diversifies this by exchanging one, two, or sometimes three of the normal feet for other kinds, skilfully distributing the substituted feet in different parts of successive verses, so as to produce a pleasing variety of accent, to enhance the expressiveness of the language, and yet never to take away the distinctive movement of the measure. The art of the versification consists in the "aptness" of the distribution of the feet, in connection with the immediate subject of thought.

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<sup>1</sup> The word "stress" has been employed in preference to the common term "accent," because it comprehends within its scope syllables made prominent by the delay attending their pronunciation, as well as by the force with which they are uttered.

## SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY IDEAS.

[The following matter is an abridgment of the Introduction to the editor's *Selections from the Poems of John Milton*, pp. 17 to 85.]

1. The poems of Milton were addressed to a public that was assumed to be conversant with certain groups of facts in history and science, with certain literary forms and traditions, and with certain general ideas of the nature and characteristics of the world and its inhabitants (human and superhuman). The student of to-day who hopes to read these works intelligently must strive to reproduce imaginatively within his own mind as far as possible the mental state of those readers to whom Milton consciously addressed his works, that by so doing he may be able to judge what the words of Milton *connote*, as well as what they *denote*. He must exchange his conception of the world as an unlimited Universe filled with millions of suns sweeping through space with inconceivable velocity, each possibly attended by its system of planets,—a universe in which the earth and its inhabitants seem of only incidental importance,—for the thought of a World of very limited extent, composed of a few concentric shells or spheres, enclosed in a rigid encasing firmament, and existing only for the use of mankind. He must close his eyes to the work of modern geographers, and think of this round earth as did the immediate successors of Magellan and Drake. He must discard history and substitute legend. Above all, his imagination must be peopled with figures from the past,—from Greece, from Palestine, from Mediæval Europe,—from the world of fact and the world of fancy. The following pages are intended to aid him in this backward metamorphosis.

### PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

2. In 1620 Francis Bacon published the *Novum Organum*, in which were first clearly enunciated those principles of scientific



induction which have ever since guided the research of investigators. Without the test of validity therein laid down, science, as a body of known truths, could not exist at all. When Milton wrote, not enough time had elapsed since the publication of Bacon's work to allow of much progress in the correction of former errors, or in the establishment of a body of newly discovered truths, and consequently his works reflect the traditions and assumptions of the mediæval period, which were the results of much acute observation and ingenious speculation, but were all untrustworthy, because founded on unsound premises.

3. In physics and chemistry, gravitation, as a universal tendency of portions of matter toward other portions, was as yet unknown to science. Objects in space were assumed to exist in the relation of *up* and *down* (not in relation to some centre, but absolutely), and to possess the inherent tendency to seek a lower position under the influence of their own weight whenever they were not supported by some external force.

4. Matter was conceived as atomic in structure, and the atoms of matter were thought to be subject to four primary forces or principles — "Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry." By these forces, acting upon the atoms either singly or in conjunction, and with various degrees of intensity, the innumerable objects of the natural world were conceived to be built up. Since the forces were four in number, objects would naturally fall into four classes, of which earth, air, water, and fire were taken as types, solids in general being considered as earthy, gases as airy, etc. The four typical substances were generally known as the "elements." The expression "*The element*" was used distinctively of the air, as the chief in importance, owing to its relation to man, the central object of interest in the universe.

5. In accordance with the law stated above, the elements would tend to assume certain positions relative to one another; fire, the most subtle and refined, ever mounting upward, earthy substances ever seeking a lower level. Therefore the upper regions of the World were assumed to be composed of the purest form of matter, called by Milton *fiery essence*. We should conceive of this substance as resembling fire, not in its attribute of heat, but in its subtlety, delicacy, purity, and brilliancy. A fifth substance, called *ether*, had found place in the speculations of the earliest philoso-

phers; this was the purest form of matter conceivable by man, and was supposed by them to fill all the regions of space not occupied by the grosser substances.

6. Among solids the metals have always been of prime importance to man, and certain phenomena common to them all (such as their greater relative weight, their general appearance in nature in the form of sulphates and sulphides, and their behavior when brought into contact with mercury) early led to the belief that *all metals are compounds of mercury and sulphur in different proportions*, gold being the compound most perfectly proportioned. This belief led to the attempt to convert base metals into gold by blending with any given metal some compound containing the exact quantity of sulphur and mercury needed to correct the misproportion in the baser metal, together with chemicals fitted to promote the mysterious blending process. This compound, which received the name of the "Philosopher's Stone," was sought by all students of chemistry for many centuries, and the study pursued with that end in view was called "Alchemy."

7. A study so fascinating, a possibility so attractive, could not hold the attention of the world for many centuries without leaving a permanent impress upon its habits of thought and expression. Milton conceived of the creation of the World as the work of a Great Alchemist, and assumed that "creation" consisted in bringing the atoms of matter contained in *that portion of space which the World occupies* under the sway of the four primary forces (see 4); and that the orderly and harmonious interaction of these forces is maintained through the direct control of the Creator. This reference to the World as occupying only a portion of space leads us to an examination of Milton's astronomical conceptions.

#### ASTRONOMY.

##### *The Ptolemaic Theory.*

8. From the second until the sixteenth century all ideas about astronomy had been shaped in accordance with the system propounded by Ptolemy, an astronomer of Alexandria, in his *Almagest* (about 150 A.D.). The main features of his system, together with the physical facts on which it was based, are embodied in the following brief statement.

Since vision is limited in every direction, and it is impossible to conceive of a boundary beyond which space does not exist, the early astronomers were led to believe that all that portion of space visible to man is cut off from surrounding space by an opaque spherical boundary. The earth seems to occupy a central position within this enclosing sphere, and hence received the distinctive name of "The Centre." To the casual observer the heavenly bodies appear to move uniformly about the earth once in about twenty-four hours, without changing their positions with relation to one another, and this fact was most simply accounted for by the assumption that these bodies are set rigidly in a sphere, which by revolution upon its axis bears them along in unchanged relations; hence their name of "Fixed Stars." Being irregularly distributed, and exhibiting various degrees of brightness, they naturally form well-defined groups whose principal stars suggest to the imagination the outlines of various objects in nature. In the course of time the entire sphere of fixed stars has become divided into such groups, recognized by astronomers, and called "Constellations." (See 12.)

9. But closer observation has shown that there are a few heavenly bodies whose positions relative to their companions are continually changing. Thus when a fixed star has moved through an arc of  $360^\circ$  and has returned to its original position in the sky, these bodies are seen to have moved relatively faster or more slowly, and to occupy a position in advance or in the rear of their original positions. From this circumstance they early received the name of "Planets" (= wanderers). Seven such bodies were known to Ptolemy, and their motion was explained by the assumption that each was situated in a separate zone or sphere, which had its own rate of revolution. Certain peculiarities of their motion led to the assumption that invisible crystalline spheres exist just outside the sphere of the fixed stars, and exert a disturbing influence upon the motion of the spheres within. These crystalline spheres were conceived by mediæval astronomers to be the "waters above the firmament" mentioned in Genesis i. 7. They therefore employed the word "firmament" as a technical expression for the *sphere of the fixed stars*, considered as a firm, transparent foundation for the *crystalline ocean*, but Milton employs it in its more common signification as a general name for *the entire visible heavens*.

10. It was believed that the outer bounding sphere was in rapid motion, and hence it received the name "Primum Mobile" (= first moving). Its motion was communicated by friction to the crystalline spheres within, and then (somewhat modified) to the sphere of the fixed stars and the planetary spheres. Thus every sphere had an individual motion, resulting from the modifying influence of the motions of all the rest.<sup>1</sup> In the accompanying diagram (see p. 11) the order of the spheres and the names of the planets are indicated; the planets are represented in hypothetical positions, in order to illustrate certain situations to which Milton makes reference.

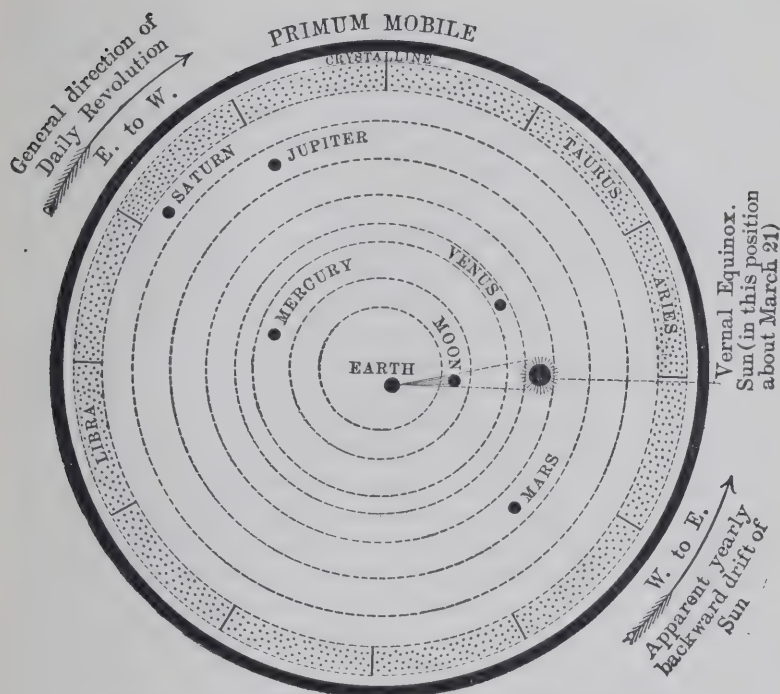
11. The most important of the seven so-called planets is the sun, whose light swallows up that of all other bodies in its vicinity. Its motion is apparently slower than that of the fixed stars, and it therefore seems to fall back among them from day to day, until in a year it has made one complete backward circuit of  $360^\circ$  in a path somewhat inclined to the celestial equator. This path is called the "ecliptic," and the points where the ecliptic intersects the celestial equator are called the "equinoctial points." The sun reaches these two points about March 21 and September 23, respectively. When its beams thus "culminate from the equator," its light is distributed equally on all parts of the lighted hemisphere of the earth at the same distance from the equator, and day and night are equal in length all over the world, whence the name "equinox."

12. Since the paths of all the seven planets lie within a belt of the heavens occupying eight degrees each side of the ecliptic, this belt has received the distinctive name of "Zodiac." It was early divided into twelve portions, called "Signs of the Zodiac," corresponding to the successive months of the year, and each containing one important constellation. These, and constellations in general, were made use of in locating the positions of heavenly bodies. Thus Milton refers to a comet in Ophiuchus, the sun in Taurus, etc. Those mentioned in the *Minor Poems* are the following:—

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<sup>1</sup> A most beautiful conception was suggested to the imagination of poets by the contemplation of the planetary motions. Must not their swift and even swing through the all-embracing ether give rise to rapid vibrations, and therefore to musical tones? Must not these tones, harmonious in pitch and exquisite in quality, ever resound in the ears of the gods, though imperceptible to our grosser senses? No other imaginative conception has taken firmer hold of the minds of the poets than this of "The music of the spheres."



THE WORLD AS REPRESENTED IN PARADISE LOST.<sup>1</sup>

Section in the plane of the ecliptic.

ANDROMEDA. — A constellation lying a little above Aries, named from the maiden in Greek mythology whom Perseus rescued from a sea-monster. (See below, Cassiopeia.)

CASSIOPEIA. — A constellation lying between Andromeda and the north pole of the heavens. It is named from a queen of Ethiopia who boasted that she was more beautiful than the Nereids (see 50).

<sup>1</sup> Note that (a) the eccentricity of the planetary orbits is exaggerated, in order to render it apparent to the eye; (b) the positions of the planets are so chosen as to illustrate situations to which Milton refers; (c) the dotted circles represent simply limits beyond which the planets never pass (Milton conceived the spheres as zones in the firmament [see 9] without material boundaries); (d) although the sun's motion is always from east to west, yet since his motion is slower than that of the fixed stars, he appears to move backward among them, making a complete circuit of the Zodiac once in 365+ days.

At their request, Neptune sent a sea-monster to ravage the coast, and Andromeda, the queen's daughter, was exposed on a rock to appease his hunger, but was rescued by Perseus, who, with the aid of the head of Medusa (see 52) transformed the monster into a rock. All the human actors in this drama were afterward transformed into constellations.

CYNOSURE (The Lesser Bear).—The constellation which contains the pole star, and is, therefore, suggestive of guidance. Milton calls it the "Tyrian Cynosure" in allusion to the fact that the earliest navigators to employ its aid were the Phœnicians, whose principal seaports were Tyre and Sidon. The Greeks fabled that Callisto, an Arcadian nymph bound to virginity by her vows to Diana, bore a son, Arcas, to Jupiter. Diana in punishment transformed both mother and son into bears, and Jupiter, to save them from hunters, transferred them to the skies, where they still shine as the Greater and the Lesser Bear. Since Arcas was the grandson of the king of Arcady, Milton calls the pole star in the Lesser Bear the "Star of Arcady."<sup>1</sup> The Greater and the Lesser Bear lie so far to the north that in Milton's latitude they do not sink below the horizon and are therefore visible throughout the night.

ORION.—The most brilliant constellation in the heavens, representing a hunter equipped with belt, sword, club, and shield. It lies on the equator south and east of Taurus.

13. It will be observed that if the sun, earth, and moon should assume the relative positions indicated in the diagram (p. 11), the sun would cease to be visible from a certain portion of the earth's surface. The sun under these conditions is said to be in *eclipse*. Although astronomers early discovered the cause of eclipses, in the popular mind they were held to be ominous of evil, and to bring evil fortune to any undertaking entered upon during their continuance.

14. As the planets are visible only when they occupy a position at some distance from the sun, each planet will appear sometimes in advance of the sun in the morning sky, sometimes following the

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<sup>1</sup> The editor cannot agree with those who interpret this phrase as the *constellation* of the *Greater Bear*. The form of the phrase and the context clearly indicate that the thought is of a single guiding point, and the word "or" in the phrase "Star of Arcady, or Tyrian Cynosure," seems to him to introduce, not another object of thought, but another expression for the same object.

sun at evening. It is called *evening* or *morning star* accordingly. Venus — being at times an especially notable object in the west at twilight, because its brilliancy makes it visible when the light of the other heavenly bodies is still lost in that of the sun, — received from the ancients the distinctive name of “Hesperus” or *The Evening Star*. In the diagram (p. 11), Venus is represented in its traditional character as “evening star,” closely following the sun and therefore visible in the west at sunset. When, in another part of its course, it appeared in the morning in advance of the sun, it was called “Lucifer” or the “Light-bringer.”

15. The myriads of fixed stars and the planets together comprise all the bodies commonly visible in the heavens. At irregular intervals small bodies of matter (of which space contains vast numbers) enter our atmosphere under the influence of gravitation, and, becoming heated by the friction caused by their rapid motion through the air, present the appearance of lines of fire. These bodies are called *meteors* or, more popularly, *shooting stars*.

16. Each planet was formerly supposed to exert on human beings an influence corresponding to the character of the Greek deity from whom it received its name. This influence was beneficial or harmful, powerful or weak, in its effect upon any individual, according to the position of the planet in the heavens at his birth. For example, two planets  $180^{\circ}$  apart (as are Mars and Saturn in the diagram, p. 11) are in their most unfavorable position or “aspect,” and their “influence” is especially malign, because their rays act in “opposition” to one another.

Certain of the fixed stars and constellations, also, were held to affect earthly events when in some dominant position. For example, Sirius, a fiery and malignant-looking star, by acting in conjunction with the sun in the late summer, was held to cause the parching heat which shrivels and blackens all vegetation. He is therefore called “the swart star.” The *pseudo-science* which deals with the influence of the heavenly bodies on human life and character is called *astrology*, and many of its terms have won their way into common speech, such as “influence,” “saturnine,” “ill-starred.” “Disastrous,” a word of Greek origin equivalent to “ill-starred,” probably retains in Milton’s poetry this astrological implication.

*The Copernican Theory.*

17. In 1543 Copernicus, by publishing to the world his theory that the sun, not the earth, is the body about which the planets move, laid the foundation for a more correct science of astronomy. Galileo, a Tuscan astronomer, by applying the already well-known properties of lenses to the purposes of astronomical study, was able to construct an astronomical telescope by the aid of which the theories of Copernicus were corroborated, since all the planets were shown to shine, like the moon, with light reflected from the sun. At the time when these poems were composed the Copernican theory had become the one preferred among the learned, but Milton seems to have felt that its truth was not wholly demonstrated, and that he was therefore free to adopt for his poem the Ptolemaic system as the one more capable of poetic and dramatic treatment. The chief advantage of the latter theory was that it gave full rein to the imagination in regard to the region outside the *Primum Mobile*, since no eye had ever penetrated that opaque barrier. Milton, seizing upon the hint contained in the Biblical phrases "ascend into Heaven," "cast down to Hell," could represent both Heaven and Hell as located in outer space, the one above, the other below the World.<sup>1</sup> An account of these regions will be more comprehensible if given in connection with an examination of the religious and theological beliefs of his time. (See 70.)

## SUPERSTITIONS.

18. A curious witness to the growth of scientific knowledge since the time of Milton is the subsequent decay of superstitions then

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<sup>1</sup> The tendency to confound certain terms shown by many editors of Milton's poems suggests a word of caution in regard to the use of the expressions, "The Universe," "Heaven," "The World," "The Earth." *The Earth* is man's abode, a sphere of a few thousand miles in diameter, ultimately accessible in every part. *The World* is this sphere plus its enclosing spheres, the latter being knowable only through the faculty of vision, and limiting the operation of that faculty. *The Universe* is this World plus all space outside and its contents, including Heaven, Hell, and Chaos. *Heaven* as a proper noun (and therefore employing the initial capital) means the region in the Universe set apart for the abode of the Deity. In such phrases as "heaven and earth," the word "heaven" is a common noun, meaning the encircling firmament or sky. As this contains many spheres, the plural form, "heavens," is frequently used.



universally accepted. His references to witchcraft in general and to local traditions of the supernatural are numerous. The acknowledged supreme goddess of witchcraft, since the days of the Greeks, has been Hecate ; but each country of Europe has its own demonology. The malignant Norse Night-hag (*P. L.* II. 662), whose abhorred rites required the shedding of infants' blood ; the more harmless Welsh Mab, whose petty annoyances punished slovenliness in maids, and who deigned to accept their propitiatory offerings of junkets set out at night for her delectation (*L'Allegro*, 102) ; the English Will-o'-the-Wisp, whose characteristic was merely mischievous delight in leading travellers astray with his mysterious lantern,<sup>1</sup> — were all familiar to Milton's contemporaries and were implicitly believed to exist. So, too, was Mab's counterpart of the opposite sex, the drudging goblin (or hobgoblin), who at times made mischief for the farm laborers, but if propitiated with a bowl of cream would perform the work of several men in a single night. *At night*, for at break of day every visitant from the other world must seek his hiding-place. Ghosts might revisit "the glimpses of the moon," but must never brave the stare of the sun.

19. The moon, indeed, is naturally associated with witchcraft, since Hecate is at times identified with Diana, goddess of the moon — probably because of the many mysterious transformations which it undergoes. Witches, it was said, could cause some of these changes. For example, they could bring about an eclipse of the moon, or could draw it out of its course, towards the earth. The sports of fairy elves seem more suited to the peaceful character of a moonlight night, however, than do violent or evil deeds ; and Milton himself is more interested in the kindlier spirits, the beautiful and playful creatures that haunt forest and stream, than in the "meddling elf" that blasts the farmers' crops (*Comus*, 846), the "unlaid ghost" whose unatoned sins forbid him to rest quietly in the grave (*Comus*, 434), or his fellow-shade that cannot bear to abandon the body which has ministered to his sensual pleasures (*Comus*, 470). Religion had its share in these superstitions, as witness the myth of the Archangel Michael referred to in *Lycidas*, 161. On the southern coast of Cornwall is a rocky promontory

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<sup>1</sup> Milton seems to confuse him with another imp of the same type, called Friar Rush.



now called St. Michael's Mount. Here the Angel was once seen by some hermits, seated in a natural stone chair, gazing seaward, where lay (far away to the south, but faintly visible, according to local tradition) "Namancos and Bayona's hold," on the coast of Spain. Milton interweaves that tradition with another local one of a Cornish giant whom he names Bellerus, from Bellerium, the ancient Latin name of Land's End, the scene of his exploits.

It was a common matter of religious belief that the angels whose revolt from God's authority forms the subject of these selections, after imprisonment in Hell, escaped to the Earth, where they became demons inhabiting the four elements (see 4) and later won over mankind to worship them in the guise of heathen gods. This notion is the result of an engrafting of such Scriptural references as that to the "powers of the air" upon the Platonist doctrine of "demons" or spirits occupying different regions of the World, as the depths of the earth, the atmosphere, etc.

20. Milton's allusions to current superstitious beliefs are numerous, yet they are too unimportant to admit of their fuller treatment here. The student must simply be quick to perceive in such a reference as that to the *unlucky left* side, or to magic numbers like *seven, nine, and three*, an appeal to his readers' traditional ideas of the supernatural significance of things now deemed unimportant.

#### MYTHOLOGY.

21. Milton's mind was stored with the mythologies of Greece and Rome as they appeared in the works of the classic poets. These mythologies were not fixed and consistent in form, but conceptions originally crude were developed and modified by each successive poet in such a way as to embody the results of his own reflection upon the phenomena of life. Thus in Milton's works we meet with various forms of the same legend, from the primitive one to his own modification thereof.<sup>1</sup>

Myths in their primitive form probably embodied the literal beliefs of men of the earliest ages, to whose childlike minds (for example) the assumption that the storm cloud or the darkness of

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<sup>1</sup> The accounts of the various myths here given will be those employed by Milton, and it need not surprise the student to find them, in certain respects, different from the accounts given in some works of general reference.

might is a veritable dragon that swallows up the sun was the simplest explanation of the phenomenon of the daily disappearance of that body. But as men developed moral perceptions and æsthetic tastes, there gathered about such bits of primitive *scientific* explanation encrustations in the shape of additional details intended either to account for the existence of such supernatural beings as the dragon above mentioned (imaginary genealogies of the gods), or to adapt them to the uses of art (romantic fictions), or to employ them in the expression of moral ideas (symbolism). In any given age all these features of the myth were probably present, but each affected the conceptions of people of a certain type only.

The uneducated classes, for instance, may have believed that the sun was an archer named Apollo, who rode daily through the heavens, and who was the son of the ruler of that region. The student of science of the same period believed that the sun was a luminous body of matter endowed in some manner with the power of motion, and having its origin in the unknown but all-powerful Source of All things. He was content to express the first fact under the image of *personality*, and the other under the image of *parentage*. The poet and moralist saw in the sun a proof of beneficent care over the universe conjoined at times with stern discipline to mankind, and seized upon the glory, the beauty, and the terror of the sun to adorn his poem or to point its moral. The events were ascribed to localities exhibiting suitable characteristics, local heroes and local legendary happenings were interwoven with the original myth, confusion of language distorted its original form, and the result is an incongruous mixture of elements, some significant of deep thought, some picturesque only, some so crude as to be uninteresting or repulsive.

### *Ancient Cosmography.*

22. The primitive Greeks conceived the sky to be a solid arch, supported in some way at the outer edge of the earth. As their knowledge of the earth's surface was limited to a circle of a few thousand miles' radius, they supposed it to be a flat, disklike expanse of land, bounded on all sides by water. They conceived the ocean to be a stream girdling the earth, fed by the rivers flowing from the land into the great basins of the Mediterranean and the Black seas. To the overarching sky was given the name of Uranus (Heaven), to the solid disk the name Gaia, or Terra (Earth), to the ocean stream the name Oceanus. What lay below the disk they did not know, but they imagined that there lay a vast region of unbroken darkness (for they supposed the sun to rest from his labors when he reached a point below the horizon, and not to

traverse the space below). To this region, employed by the gods as a dungeon, was given the name Tartarus.

23. When the idea of the continued life of man's spirit after the death of the body had developed, they conceived that above the dungeon of Tartarus lay a sort of under world, called Hades, inhabited by the spirits of the dead, the approach to which lay through cavernous passages in the earth's surface. As the ethical conceptions of reward and punishment after death developed, the entire lower region became in thought subdivided into Elysium (the abode of the souls of the good), Tartarus (formerly the dungeon of the gods, now used as a place of punishment for the souls of the wicked), and other regions of less importance. By successive poets imaginative details were added to this meagre account. The cavernous opening in the earth's surface through which lay one approach to Hades was said to be guarded by monstrous forms, notably by a huge three-headed dog, Cerberus, whose jaws dripped poison, whose hair was formed of snakes, whose body terminated in a dragon, and whose roar struck terror into the mind of the hearer. After passing this monster and traversing a difficult descent, the visitor would find his passage barred by the Styx, a dark and sluggish stream (or rather labyrinth of creeks and inlets) encircling nine times the realm of Hades. Other rivers channelled the abode of the dead, — Acheron (= woe), a river of muddy and bitter waters; Cocytus (= lament), a tributary of the Acheron; Phlegethon (= burn), whose banks were scorched and blackened by fire. In the portion assigned to the souls of the blessed, called Elysium, flowed the Lethe (= forget), a drink from whose waters dispelled care and destroyed all memory of the past life. The ruler of the entire space below the earth was originally Erebus, but afterward Hades assumed control there. (See 30 and 31.)

24. (Omitted.)

25. As early man could conceive of no action except as originated and directed by an indwelling life like that which dominated his own body, the Greeks believed that in clouds, streams, trees, winds, earthquakes, — in fact, in all the phenomena of nature, — there was manifested the volition of indwelling spirits, to which they gave appropriate names. The Romans, with like conceptions, created a mythology so similar that the poets are in the habit of

using the Greek and the Roman names of deities interchangeably, in spite of the fact that the kindred myths of the two races often show marked differences of detail. Thus the Roman Jove, or Jupiter, is assumed to be the same deity as the Greek Zeus, not because he is identical in character or functions, but because he is associated with the same fundamental idea of domination over the elements. As these myths referred primarily to natural objects, names taken from them may apply either to the natural object or to its indwelling deity. Thus "Hades" is a region, and also a deity, ruling that region.

26. The multiplicity of natural phenomena provocative of either curiosity or delight gave abundant stimulus to the imagination of primitive man. The mightier forces of nature, such as volcanoes and earthquakes, were pictured as giants, whose brute strength, uncontrolled by intelligence or beneficent purpose, was exerted only in destruction. In sun, moon, air, clouds, and wild beasts, on the other hand, were seen the operations of deities more kindly, but still mighty and at times violent. In streams, trees, and flowers, and in the gentler animals, were seen the manifestation of life still more akin to that of man, and often capable of communion with him. In time these deities became grouped into families, and legends grew up in regard to their origin and history. As Milton often refers to these genealogies, and to incidents in these legends, we will notice the chief deities in the order that they appear in ancient cosmogony.

### *Ancient Cosmogony.*

27. In the beginning, said the Greek philosophers, matter must have existed in a confused and formless mass occupying the yawning abyss of space. The original condition was therefore named Chaos ( $\sqrt{\text{ }} = \text{yawn}$ ), and Milton, following the example of the Greek poets, asserts the existence of a deity, Chaos, who holds sway over the place Chaos. This weltering mass of matter ultimately came under the influence of powers which developed within it, the lighter and finer parts rising into the upper regions and coming under the sway of a deity, Uranus, and the lower settling and gaining a firm consistency, under the influence of another deity, Gaia. These deities, together with Erebus and



Night, who jointly dominated the regions below the earth, form the first dynasty of the gods.

28. They had offspring of three distinct types. First are the deities of distinct regions of the world or of general conditions. Such are *Æther* (see 5) and *Hemera* (day), children of *Erebus* and *Night*, and *Eos* or *Aurora* (dawn). The second type of offspring are the gigantic beings mentioned above as causing volcanoes and other convulsions of nature. They are the firstborn children of *Uranus* and *Gaia*, and are represented as having a hundred hands and fifty heads. The third and greatest type are the *Titans*, also children of *Heaven* and *Earth*, but less repulsive in appearance and less brutal in nature than their brothers. They are characterized by great power, conjoined with intelligence to direct that power. Many of them are identified with the mightier but orderly forces of nature. Such were *Oceanus* (the sea), *Cronus* or *Saturn* (time), *Rhea* (productiveness), *Hyperion* (the sun).

29. The myth arose that *Uranus*, displeased with his eldest offspring, cast them into his dungeon in *Tartarus*. *Gaia* thereupon stirred up the *Titans* to rebellion under the leadership of *Saturn*. Armed with a sickle provided by his mother, *Saturn* wounded his father, and from the drops of blood that fell upon the earth sprang up a hideous race of gigantic monsters with legs formed of serpents, to whom *Milton* gives the distinctive name "Earth-born," to distinguish them from those giants born of both *Heaven* and *Earth*. Although it would normally have been the "birthright" of the eldest Titan, *Oceanus*, to succeed his father, *Saturn*, as the chief agent in the downfall of *Uranus*, seized the throne of the universe, taking as his consort his sister *Rhea*. With them begins the second dynasty of the gods.

30. They had many children, among them *Neptune* (*Poseidon*), *Pluto* (*Hades*), *Jove* (*Zeus*), *Vesta*, *Ceres*, *Juno*. In order to avoid a fate like his father's, *Cronus* attempted to devour each of his children at his birth. *Jove* was saved by a device of his mother, and by a medicinal potion compelled his father to disgorge those children already swallowed.

31. The children thus rescued made war upon their father to dethrone him. The scene of the war was in *Thessaly*, *Jove*, with his brothers *Neptune* and *Pluto* and their forces, taking his stand on *Mount Olympus*, and *Saturn* on the opposite height of *Mount*



Othrys. Powerful allies of Jove were the hundred-handed giants, who under the leadership of Briareos, one of their number, hurled destructive thunderbolts at Saturn's crew. With their aid victory fell to the rebellious sons, who proceeded to apportion the universe among themselves by lot. The primacy in rank and the immediate care of the earth and of the upper region fell to Jove, the sway of the watery kingdom was assigned to Neptune, and Pluto was obliged to be content with playing the part of a "Nether Jove" in the under world. Saturn, driven into exile, fled with his friends across the Adriatic Sea to Italy. His divine presence there wrought such beneficent effects upon civilization that the period of his reign is called the Golden Age.

In *Il Penseroso* Milton declares that from the union of Saturn with Vesta in that early age sprang the child "Melancholy," thus symbolizing the nature of that emotion, as fostered by culture and retirement. Afterward Vesta assumed her well-known character of goddess of the domestic hearth in Rome, and pledged herself by an oath to Jove to live thenceforth the life of a celibate.

32. With the accession of Jove and his brothers to power began the third dynasty of the gods. Soon they were compelled to defend themselves against a rebellion on the part of the Earth-born giants (see 29). The most formidable ally of the latter was the fire-breathing, hundred-headed monster Typhon, who came to their aid from his den near the city of Tarsus in Asia Minor. His stature reached the sky, his eyes flashed fire, his voices struck terror to the heart. He so terrified the lesser gods that they fled from Olympus to Egypt and disguised themselves in the forms of animals (see 55). But Jove made good his claims to sovereignty by defeating even this enemy, and thereafter reigned in peace.

33. The race of man appeared on the earth in due time, either by spontaneous generation or by direct creation, and the gods withdrew to regions inaccessible to man, such as the tops of lofty mountains, or the recesses of the earth or the sea. Jove, with his sister Juno as queen, formed a permanent court on Mount Olympus. There the gods sat in council, or feasted on ambrosia and drank nectar, served by Jove's cup-bearer, the beautiful Hebe, whose name is the poets' synonym for fresh and youthful beauty.

34. Although Jove dwelt in this palace on Mount Olympus, yet he frequented certain other localities, where he communicated his

will to man through oracles. Mount Ida, in Crete, where he had been hidden from his bloodthirsty parent in infancy (see 30), remained ever sacred to him ; at Dodona, in Epirus, his oracles could be heard voiced in the rustling leaves of his sacred oak ; and Olympia, in Elis, was the centre of his worship, where from all Greece men gathered to pray in his temple, and where at intervals of four years contests of skill were celebrated in his honor.

35. By union with many immortal and mortal wives, he begat numerous offspring, who inherited a portion of their father's divinity and became subordinate deities, exercising a limited authority over some portion of the world or some element of human character.

*Lesser Deities.*

36. Among the children of Jove, none are more important in poetry than the Muses, born of his wife Mnemosyne (Memory). These were held to be the deities that inspire in man artistic powers. They are nine in number, each imparting some special art impulse to her devotees. They are represented as living in the neighborhood of mountains, such as Parnassus, in Phocis; Olympia, in Elis; Helicon, in the district of Bœotia called Aonia. The Pierian springs beneath Olympus, the Castalian spring beneath Parnassus, and the springs of Hippocrene and Aganippe beneath Helicon were the haunts of the Muses, their gentle, spontaneous, musical currents symbolizing the flow of poetic and artistic inspiration into the human soul.

37. Of the children of Jove, perhaps the next in importance are Phœbus-Apollo and Diana, born at Delos, whither their mother Latona had been driven because of the jealousy of Juno. Because born at the foot of Mount Cynthus, they are known as Cynthius and Cynthia, respectively.

38. Phœbus-Apollo is god of light, prophecy, music, poetry, and archery, and of the arts and sciences. In appearance he is the type of manly beauty. His musical and poetic gifts are symbolized by the lyre, which he usually carries in his hand. As god of light, he is represented as the deity that drives in the flaming chariot of the sun through the heavens, usurping the place of the earlier deity Helios. Preceded by the Dawn (see 28), he issues from his "chamber in the east," and guides his coursers along their sloping path until at night they plunge beyond the ocean's marge, where

he cools the burning axle of his wain and rests his weary steeds. In his circuit his vision penetrates the most secret recesses of the world, and nothing escapes his all-seeing eyes ; hence his gift of prophecy.

39. In order to exercise this precious power for man's benefit, he early sought on the earth a fitting spot for an oracle, and found it in a cave beneath a cliff of Mount Parnassus. He appeared to some mariners in the Ægean Sea in the form of a dolphin (Gr. = Delphin), and, with the aid of winds divinely controlled, drove their vessel to a harbor near the chosen spot. He then revealed himself to them as a god, and appointed them his priests. From this miracle the place was named Delphi, and he was called the Delphian Apollo. The dolphin was thereafter associated in legends with musicians and poets, as in the myth of Arion, which Milton imitates in *Lycidas*. Milton prays that, as Arion, when thrown into the Mediterranean Sea by pirates, was received and borne ashore by a dolphin which had been charmed by his beautiful music, so may dolphins convey to him the corse of his poet friend.

40. Apollo fell ardently in love with a nymph named Daphne, but she, being vowed to celibacy, rejected his suit and fled from his amorous wooing. The god pursuing, she prayed to be rescued, and in answer to her prayer Jove transformed her into a laurel bush. Apollo, in remorse, decreed that the laurel should remain ever green, and be held sacred to himself. The laurel is therefore of great importance in literature. Supremacy in matters of skill, or preëminence in any art such as Apollo alone could convey, was formerly recognized by the award of a wreath of laurel to the person thus endowed. In modern English, the title "laureate" implies supremacy in poetic creation; as a technical term in Great Britain, it means a poet appointed by the State to commemorate events of importance to the nation.

41. Apollo was not more fortunate in his friendship than in his love. While playing at quoits one day, he accidentally struck his friend Hyacinthus with his quoit and killed him. Apollo caused a flower to spring up from his blood, and on the leaves of this "sanguine flower" inscribed a memorial of his grief in the word *alaî* (= alas!). (See *Lycidas*, 106.)

42. Orpheus, son of Apollo and Calliope (Muse of epic poetry), was endowed with powers hardly less than those of his father.

He wedded a nymph named Eurydice, and at her early death he was inconsolable. He finally took a lyre given him by Apollo and made his way to Hades to seek her. His song "suspended Hell and took with ravishment the thronging audience." Even the inexorable deities wept with pity, and Pluto granted his request that Eurydice might accompany him back to the upper world, but only on condition that Orpheus should precede her out of Hades, and should not look behind him until he had emerged into the light of day. As he reached the limits of Hades, Orpheus was unable to refrain from casting a look backward to ascertain whether his wife was really following. His lack of faith was punished, for Eurydice immediately vanished forever from his sight. Realizing that he had lost his wife through his own fault, he wandered inconsolable in the forests of Thrace until he met a rout of Thracian women celebrating with wild, drunken orgies the rites of Bacchus. They demanded that he should join the revel, and in a frenzy of anger at his melancholy refusal they tore him to pieces. His head was thrown into the river Hebrus and floated to Lesbos in the Ægæan Sea, where it was enshrined with due ceremony by the pious islanders.

43. Diana, twin sister of Apollo, has many of his characteristics. As he is god of the blazing sunlight, she is goddess of the colder and paler moonlight. She is therefore a patron goddess of chastity. As he is god of archery, so she is depicted as a huntress, always bearing about with her her bow and quiver, with which she pursues the wild animals through the forest. Milton interprets the myth beautifully in *Comus*, 438 +.

44. Minerva is goddess of wisdom and of armed resistance. She sprang from the head of Jove, full grown and clad in armor. She chose to remain a virgin, and thus became the patron goddess of chaste maidens. Her purity, not her warlike character, is typified in the helmet, spear, and shield with which she is equipped. Her shield or ægis is covered with dragons' scales, bordered with serpents, and armed with the head of Medusa (see 52). Sacred to her was the owl, the calm, steady gaze of whose wide-open eyes has always suggested to man the absorption of mind characteristic of the sage.

45. Vulcan, called by Milton *Mulciber*, son of Jupiter and Juno, was the god of mechanical arts, and especially of the use of fire in



working metals. Unlike the other gods, he was misshapen and lame; but, in spite of his uncouth appearance, he won the beautiful Aphrodite (see 46) for his wife.

46. Of all the powers of nature personified in mythology, none exerts a more universal sway, none appears more prominently in literature, than does Venus, goddess of love and of feminine beauty. Astarte or Astoreth (plural = Ashtaroth) is the corresponding Phœnician deity, although, unlike the Roman Venus, she is intimately associated with the moon. In Greece, the name of the goddess is Aphrodite, and the Greek myth varies from the Roman in explaining her origin in a different manner. The Romans made Venus the child of Jupiter and Dione, while the Greek Aphrodite was said to have sprung from the foam of the sea, where the blood of the wounded Uranus dropped into it (see 29). In Rome her husband was Mars, in Greece Hephaistos, the counterpart of the Roman Vulcan (45). She was the mother of Cupid or Eros, god of the passion of love, and of Hymen, god of marriage (whose mantle of golden color and torch symbolize the wedding processions that he sanctions); and by her union with the Trojan Anchises she became the parent of Æneas, the founder of the Roman nation (see 67).

47. Venus experienced all the keenness of the pangs which she caused in others; for she ardently loved a beautiful youth named Adonis, and he was killed while hunting the wild boar. So intense was her grief that Hades could not resist her appeals for the restoration of her lover, and he permitted Adonis to spend six months of every year with Venus in Olympus. In Syria, where Adonis was worshipped under the name of Thammuz, it was believed that he was wounded anew every year, as was shown by the fact that in the rainy season the river Adonis became tinged with red. This river flows from the Lebanon Mountains, where he yearly hunted the boar, to the Mediterranean Sea. In these mountains the Syrian women annually congregated to lament his death.

48. A myth exerting almost as great an influence upon art and literature is that of Cupid and Psyche, symbolizing as it does the human soul dominated by its most powerful emotion. Psyche, a king's daughter, became the wife of Cupid, but her beauty inflamed the jealousy of his mother, Venus, who by a stratagem caused Psyche to disobey an injunction laid upon her by her husband and



thus brought about a separation between the pair. Pysche wandered through the earth, undergoing various troubles and pains, but not until after she had traversed the under world also did she find her missing husband. Then Jove in pity made her immortal, and she was reconciled to Venus and took her place among the gods on Olympus.

49. The deities thus far mentioned shared with Jove his life in the upper regions. We now turn to Neptune and the deities of his watery domain. Neptune took as a consort Amphitrite, and by her he had a son, Triton, who acted as his father's trumpeter, "the herald of the sea." Like Jove, Neptune exerted only a general control, distributing his realm among many "blue-haired deities" and giving them leave "to wield their little tridents."

50. Oceanus, having refused to join in the war against Jove (see 32), was left in control of the ocean *stream* (see 22). Nereus, a calm, placid deity, ruled the *seas* from his palace beneath the Ægean, where he dwelt with his fifty beautiful daughters, the Nereids. Proteus, son of Neptune and shepherd of his flocks, dwelt on the island of Carpathus. He was a deity much sought for on account of his power of prophecy. He disliked to exercise this power and would slip away into the sea unless firmly held by his questioner. If so held, he would transform himself rapidly into a variety of repulsive shapes in order to terrify the inquirer. But if the latter were persistent enough, he would resume his original shape, and yield the desired information. Another sea-god of prophetic powers is Glaucus. He had been mortal, but, having eaten of an herb of magic powers, felt irresistibly impelled to spring into the sea, and there "underwent a quick immortal change." His immortality was unwelcome, however, and successive years brought only increased longing for death.

Myths regarding the deification of mortals are very common among the poets. Another example is that of Leucothea, a Theban princess, who, when pursued by her husband to the seashore, sprang with her infant son into the deep. There they both became deities. As the river goddess Sabrina was deified under much the same conditions, Milton's appeal to these and kindred deities in *Comus* 867 + is peculiarly appropriate. Thetis, there mentioned, was a Nereid (see above); Parthenope was a Siren whose tomb was fabled to be at Naples; and Ligeia was a sister Siren (see 59).

51. Like the gods of water and sky, the lesser gods of earth appear in groups. If there be one of more prominence than another, it would seem to be Pan, or Sylvanus, god of rural life and of animate nature in general. With him are associated groups of *Satyrs* (beings combining the physical characteristics of goats and of men), and of *Fauns* (a slightly higher type than satyrs, betraying their animal nature only by their pointed furry ears, but lacking all moral sense). Their lives were given up to careless sport in forests and on lawns, in the company of the tree-nymphs (*Dryades*) or fresh-water nymphs (*Naiades*). Then, too, every object and place had its *Genius* or special attendant spirit, who guarded it and shaped its fortunes.

Besides the nymphs mentioned above, there were nymphs of the meadows, of the vales, of the mountains, of marshes, of rivers, etc. One of the most celebrated is Echo, a mountain nymph who fell in love with a beautiful youth named Narcissus, son of a river god. Her love being unrequited, she pined away until nothing was left of her save her voice. Narcissus, whose admiration for his own beautiful face had rendered him insensible to her charms, was punished by the gods with a fate like hers; for he gazed at his own reflection in brooks and fountains until he also pined away and was transformed into the flower that bears his name.

52. The deities thus far mentioned "were the prime in order and in might. The rest were long to tell." But we should be familiar with certain groups of beings, such as the *Winds* (Zephyrus, Boreas, etc.), with their ruler Æolus, called by Milton "Hippotades"; the *Harpies*, foul beings with women's heads and birdlike bodies and legs, who punished crime; and the *Furies*, creatures possessing terrible features and carrying scourges of snakes in their hands, who tormented guilty souls. Of especial importance are the *Gorgons*, women with snaky locks, whose look had power to turn the terror-stricken gazer into stone. The chief Gorgon, Medusa, is especially well known to literature, since her head, severed from her body by Perseus (see 12, "Cassiopeia"), was fastened in the centre of Minerva's shield.

Far different from the Gorgons were the three *Graces*, whose names (Aglaia = splendor, Euphrosyne = joy, and Thalia = pleasure) suggest their nature and their mission to mortals; and the *Hours*, beautiful maidens who represent the seasons of the year.

53. Other Olympian deities well known to literature are the three following:—

Iris, goddess of the rainbow and therefore of color. From the position of the rainbow and its swift appearance after a storm in which Jove's thunderbolts have cleft the clouds, Iris has been termed the Messenger of Jove.

Hermes or Mercury, the general messenger of the gods. As speed is essential in such an officer, we find associated with him the kindred idea of light and graceful motion, such as is employed in the dance. The most swiftly moving of the planets bears his name, as does the (supposed) active chemical principle of all things, *quicksilver* or "Volatile Hermes." (See 6.)

Bacchus, god of wine. In *Comus*, 48, Milton refers to the legend of his seizure by Tyrrhenian pirates, who supposed him a beautiful youth and designed to sell him as a slave. He rescued himself by exerting his divine power and transforming his captors into dolphins.

54. Supreme above all the classic gods and goddesses we find the Fates, called by Milton "Daughters of Necessity." These sisters share in the determination of all human events by allotting to each man his portion of life, and no god, not even Jove himself, can set aside their decrees. One, Clotho, is represented as holding a spindle or distaff, while a second, Lachesis, draws from it the thread (symbolic of human life), and the third, Atropos, cuts the latter at the moment decreed. Back of this triple conception lies the older thought of Fate as a single impersonal, all-controlling power, binding gods and men equally, and Milton more than once by implication gives expression to this idea.

55. Milton's works contain many references to the mythology of Egypt, but as that mythology has not won a place in literature at all comparable with that of the Greek myths, his references are confined to general features, such as the titles of the better-known Egyptian gods, and a few descriptive epithets, such as "*brutish* gods." The Egyptians represented the forces of nature under the forms of animals, instead of under those of human beings (see 32). Osiris, the sun-god, was the chief deity, worshipped also under the name of Serapis. A sacred bull, called Apis, was worshipped as his visible incarnation upon earth. Like other great deities, he was doomed to be vanquished by an enemy, his brother Typhon (represented as a crocodile), who severed his body into many parts and

threw them into the Nile. His wife Isis gathered the different portions and placed them in a sacred chest or shrine. She is represented as a woman having the horns of a cow. Of their sons, Anubis was represented with the head of a jackal, Orus (or Horus) with that of a hawk. Ammon (or Hammon) was the chief god of Upper Egypt, although his worship was also carried on in an oasis of the Libyan Desert. He was represented with horns like those of a ram.

56. In the quick comprehension of allusions to these imaginative creations of the ancient world lies one of the pleasures which literature offers to the reader. A like pleasure springs from the perception of the charm, the glamour, that pervades the thought of remote lands and bygone civilizations, known to us only through romance or through the description of the curious traveller, whose experiences lose nothing of the picturesque in the recounting. From the twelfth to the seventeenth century adventurous explorers in Asia and Africa blazed out a route for commerce to follow, returning to England with stories that stimulated the imagination to unbounded credulousness, confirming as they often did statements found in the works of the oldest writers.

Imagination ran riot in regard to these "uncouth" regions. The inhabitants of English dales loved to hear how the lofty Himalayas frowned steep over the rich plains of India, and how the snow-clad range of Imaus swept from the sources of the Ganges northward past Sericana and Tartary — names in themselves fraught with suggestions of strange peoples and customs — to lands still unpenetrated by civilized man. Ruins of ancient cities in Asia and in Africa served to corroborate the testimony of early writers in regard to the ancient glories of Egypt and Assyria. The pyramids on the heights above Cairo still looked down upon the site of Memphis, whose splendid temple of Serapis rivalled that of Belus at Babylon. And if these dumb witnesses of the past compelled belief in the legends that cluster about their names, how much more credible must have seemed the written records of the epic poem, the historical narrative, the cycles of romance!

#### CLASSIC LEGENDS.

A few legends inherited from ancient Greece have for centuries furnished the writers of Western Europe with heroic figures,



romantic episodes, and picturesque details, which serve as illustrative matter wherewith to enrich their productions, until the legends have become interwoven into the very tissue of literature, and no scholar is equipped for general reading until he has come to know their principal incidents. We shall complete our treatment of classical references with such details from the story of the Argonautic Expedition, the Adventures of Hercules, and the Siege of Troy as may be of assistance in reading Milton's works.

*The Argonautic Expedition.*

57. This legend relates how thousands of years ago the king of the country of Colchis, on the Black Sea, possessed a wonderful treasure in the shape of a ram's fleece of pure gold, which he guarded with the utmost care, because it was eagerly desired by the people who dwelt on the shores of the Ægæan. A band of heroes from Greece determined to secure the fleece, at whatever risk to themselves, and to that end built a splendid fifty-oared galley, which they named the Argo, and set out for Colchis. Notable among the heroes were Jason (their leader), the poet Orpheus, the demi-god Hercules, and the fathers of many of the heroes of the famous Trojan War. They went through many adventures before reaching Colchis, in one of which Hercules became separated from the expedition.

58. (Omitted.)

59. Arrived at Colchis, they secured the fleece with the assistance of Medea, the king's daughter (who became ardently enamoured of Jason, and abandoned her home to join her fortunes with his), and departed homeward. But more than one crime had marked their course, and the gods condemned them to wander through many strange regions ere they saw their native land. They visited the island of the goddess and enchantress Circe (see 68) to implore the aid of her mystic powers. They passed islands where resided the Sirens, nymphs the upper portion of whose bodies were those of beautiful maidens, while the lower portion resembled those of a bird. These dwelt on a rocky shore, where they sang so sweetly of the pleasures that awaited the sailor who should venture to land that no mariner who heard them could resist his longing to reach the shore; but the smiling waters concealed hidden reefs which wrecked the vessel venturing too near,



and thus the sailor who listened to their song paid the penalty of his rashness with his life. Orpheus, however, sang to the accompaniment of his lyre so sweetly that the Argonauts failed to hear the Sirens, and passed in safety. The passing between Scylla and Charybdis (see 69) was the most notable of their many succeeding adventures, before they finally reached Greece with their treasure.

*The Labors of Hercules.*

60. Hercules (properly called Heracles), who was accidentally deprived of his share in the Argonautic Expedition (see 57), was the son of Jove and a mortal named Alcmena. His enormous strength, exhibited in many exploits, has made him a leading figure in legendary history. The twelve great "labors" which he performed for the king of Mycenæ are world-renowned. One of these is of especial importance to the student of Milton's works, because it relates to the myth of the "Hesperides," a myth to which he frequently refers.

61. The myth relates that among the gifts received by Juno on the occasion of her marriage with Jove was a tree bearing apples of the purest gold. Juno caused the tree to be set in a garden in the extreme west, where dwelt the mighty monarch Atlas, supporting upon his shoulders the weight of the dome of the sky. The precious apples were intrusted to the care of his daughters, who, from the name of their mother Hesperia, or of their grandfather Hesperus, were called the *Hesperides*. They proved not entirely faithful to their trust, and Juno attempted to insure the safety of the apples by placing in the garden, as a guardian, a dragon with a hundred heads, not all of which were ever asleep at the same time.

62. One of the tasks of Hercules was to secure these golden apples. He roamed over almost the entire world, but for a long time was unable even to find the garden. Finally he learned that Atlas could aid him to secure the fruit, and he undertook to support the sky upon his own shoulders while Atlas went on his quest. The latter was able to outwit his daughters, the Hesperides, to put all the dragon's heads to sleep by enchantments, and to secure three of the apples for Hercules. The last of these tasks was to descend into the lower world and bring to the light of day the dog Cerberus (23), an exploit possible only to a being of supernatural strength.

63. (Omitted.)

*The Trojan War.*

64. In the era succeeding the Argonautic Expedition and the Adventures of Hercules, occurred the Siege of Troy. This city was the capital of a kingdom in Asia Minor, near the Hellespont, ruled by a king named Priam. One of his sons, named Paris, with the aid of the goddess Venus, carried off to Troy the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. This wife was Helen, daughter of Jupiter and Leda, and accounted the most beautiful woman in the world, so that her name has become a synonym for the perfection of female beauty. An expedition of a hundred and fifty thousand men and over a thousand ships was organized to restore the fugitive to Greece, and to wreak vengeance upon the Trojans. Menelaus' brother, the stalwart warrior Agamemnon, took command, and all the heroes of Greece joined in the undertaking.

65. Among the mortals the principal figure in the war was the mighty Achilles, who slew vast numbers of the Trojan forces, among them the Ethiopian prince, Memnon. This prince, though dark-skinned, was famed for his beauty, being a son of the beautiful prince Tithonus and Eos, goddess of the rosy dawn. It is not without reason that Milton assigns to his sister Hemera the same dusky charms of person. The capture of Troy itself was due, not to the prowess of Achilles, but to the craft of Ulysses, who becomes thenceforth the principal figure in the legend (see 68).

On the fall of Troy, Menelaus became reconciled to his wife Helen, and by a somewhat roundabout route bore her back to Sparta. On the way they visited Thone, the king of Egypt, whose wife, Polydamna, presented Helen with a magic draught called *nepenthes*. This drink had the power to invigorate the body, to dispel care from the mind, and to cause the happy partaker to forget all past causes of sorrow. With its aid the memory of Helen's infidelity was obliterated from the mind of Menelaus, and complete wedded happiness was again made possible to him.

66. Not so fortunate was his brother Agamemnon (called by Homer Pelides, *i.e.* descendant of Pelops); for his wife had become unfaithful to him during his long absence at Troy, and on his return he was treacherously murdered by her paramour. This crime and its consequences form the subject of several tragedies by Æschylus, the greatest Greek dramatist, and subjects related to this

are treated by both Sophocles and Euripides. The same authors also employ portions of the legendary history of Thebes as subject-material for dramatic treatment; but as the incidents have not won a place in general literature like those of the "Tale of Troy," they will not be rehearsed here.

*Anchises' Line.*

67. Of the Trojan leaders the only one to escape from the vengeance of the Greeks was Æneas, son of Anchises and the goddess Venus. He took refuge in a mountain near the city, and some time afterward managed to depart with a band of followers in a fleet hastily constructed. The Romans, seeking to trace an exalted ancestry for their rulers, declared that Æneas did this in accordance with a decree of Fate that he should become the founder of the Roman nation; and Virgil, in a magnificent epic, the *Æneid*, recounts the adventures of Æneas before and after reaching Italy, tracing the line of his descendants down to Augustus Cæsar, in whose reign the poem was composed.

In like manner, the earliest English writers attempted to connect this line with their own early kings; and we accordingly read in early English literature how a great-grandson of Æneas named Brut migrated from Italy to the Island of Britain and became monarch of the nation that bears his name, the Britons. According to the legend, Brut had a son and successor named Locrine. The latter had a daughter named Sabrina, by a mistress, but later wedded a woman named Gwendolen, and still later divorced her and returned to his former love. The enraged Gwendolen raised an army, attacked and defeated Locrine, and procured the death of Sabrina by drowning, but not in the exact manner described by Milton (*Comus*, 829 +).

*The Wanderings of Ulysses.*

68. The adventures of Ulysses on his departure from Troy form the subject of Homer's second great epic poem, the *Odyssey*. Ten years the hero had been absent from his home, but the Fates decreed that ten more should be spent in traversing the unknown regions of the world before he should see Ithaca again. The first of his adventures that concerns us is that with the goddess Circe.

She dwelt in a beautiful palace on an island located by Milton not far from the southern extremity of Italy (*Comus*, 49), and seduced visitors by her charms to drink of an enchanted liquor which she offered them in a golden cup. If the guest drank, the goddess touched him with her magic wand, and he fell to the ground transformed into some beast in appearance, but retaining the consciousness of a human being. Ulysses would surely have met the same fate had not Hermes (see 53) hastened to warn him, and present him with an herb called *moly*, possessed of such wondrous powers that it would entirely neutralize the enchantments of Circe. Protected by this, he first terrified and then appeased Circe. After remaining with her some months, by her advice he descended to Hades to consult the shade of the prophet Tiresias in regard to his future career. On his way to Hades he visited the lands of the Cimmerians, a country beyond the ocean stream (see 22), where reigned perpetual darkness.

69. After his return he passed the island of the Sirens, and, wishing to hear their entrancing song, assured the safety of his crew by stopping their ears with wax, and his own safety by having himself bound to the mast. He then sailed between Scylla and Charybdis, incurring that double danger which has become so famous a symbol of all difficulties requiring a choice between two evils.

The story of Scylla varies in different writers, but in Milton she is represented as a maiden who has incurred the jealousy of Amphitrite (see 49). The latter therefore cast herbs of magic power into the water in which Scylla bathed, and by their effect she was transformed from the waist downward into a hideous monster. She had six long necks, with terrific heads bearing three rows of teeth each, and her voice sounded like the barking of a dog. Her position was on the Italian side of the Straits of Messina, while in a cave opposite dwelt an immense dragon, Charybdis, which alternately swallowed and belched forth the waters of the straits. If the venturesome ship that attempted the passage sheered to the one hand, it would sacrifice its crew to Scylla; if to the other, it would be sucked down into the jaws of Charybdis and be spewed forth again a shattered wreck.

Ulysses preferred to sacrifice six men to Scylla rather than to risk his entire vessel and crew, and therefore steered nearer to Scylla and passed by Charybdis in safety. It is evident from his having



escaped so great danger that he was under the care of the Fates, and we shall not be surprised to learn that he eventually reached Ithaca, where his faithful wife received him with rejoicing.

#### RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS.

70. The account of the creation and the ancient history of the World given in the earlier books of the Bible was universally accepted as historically accurate by the religious world of the seventeenth century, and the origin of the first five books was attributed to Moses. (See 83 and 84.) As this account is meagre, the theologians of the Middle Ages had supplemented it with such additions as imagination, aided by suggestions scattered through the rest of the Bible, could supply, using the utmost ingenuity in order to harmonize the whole into a consistent narrative. This account Milton still further amplified by adding details which (without being inconsistent with the Bible story) might furnish opportunities for the exercise of his poetic art. The narrative as it appears woven into the texture of his poem is as follows :—

#### *Heaven.*

71. God, the eternal and all-powerful Being from whom and in whom all things exist, has resided throughout all past time in an upper region of space, called Heaven, surrounded by angelic attendants whom he has created, and who serve him through love, finding their highest happiness in that service.

72. Of these angels there are three hierarchies, each of which comprises three orders, and the angels of each order are distinguished from the others by the possession of some attribute in a surpassing degree. Of the first hierarchy, the Seraphim are "bright," "fiery"; the Cherubim (whose attribute is *vision*) are the guardians; the Thrones are evidently subordinate rulers. The second hierarchy is composed of Dominations, Virtues, and Powers. The third comprises Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Milton also uses the latter term generally of all the orders, and the term "Archangels" of all the higher groups, but he applies it more accurately to the seven angels who act as God's ambassadors and nuncios, and

"at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest."



It is evident that Milton conceived life in Heaven as organized under an idealized semi-military, semi-political government, in which the higher angels serve God in stations which shed honor upon them while they exhibit outwardly the kingliness of his state. In general the service of the angels consists in hymning God's praise, bringing flowers to adorn his altar, and performing such other solemn ceremonies of adoration as are due to so mighty a monarch. Their food is described by Milton in terms borrowed from Greek mythology : —

“ Tables are set and on a sudden piled  
 With angels' food ; and rubied nectar flows  
 In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,  
 Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.  
 On flowers reposed and with fresh flowerets crowned,  
 They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet  
 Quaff immortality and joy — ”

73. Heaven, their dwelling-place, is a place of exceeding beauty. Following the imagery of the Book of Revelation, Milton depicts it as a vast city “undetermined square or round,” with battlemented walls and towers of crystal. It has variety of hill and plain, and valleys threaded with streams of the purest water, on whose banks grow trees bearing fruits of wondrous powers. Although, like man, the angels enjoy “grateful vicissitude of day and night,” and even the Deity himself at times veils his glory and envelops his throne in the deepest darkness, yet the characteristic of the region is its radiant light, which emanates from every person and object there. Milton accounts for this by borrowing from the Greek scientists their conception of the “ether” (see 5), and assumes that all heavenly beings are composed of this substance purer than fire and shedding light without heat.

74. Here dwelt the angels with God in a happy and sinless state throughout unnumbered ages of the past. But on a certain day (supposed by Milton to be about six thousand years ago), God proclaimed to the assembled angels a new régime, in the following words : —

“ ‘Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light,  
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,  
 Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.  
 This day I have begot whom I declare  
 My only Son, and on this holy hill

Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
At my right hand; your Head I him appoint;  
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow  
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord.' ”

75. This proclamation aroused the jealousy and wrath of one of the principal angels, whose heavenly name must forever remain unknown, but whom we shall call Satan, because by this title (meaning *Enemy*) he was afterwards known in Heaven. He induced all but one of the angels under his regency to revolt against the elevation above themselves of any created being, and after a three days' fight he was expelled from Heaven with all his followers by the Son of God (called Messiah), and was cast into a dungeon especially created for him, deep in outer space.

One-third of all the angels were thus “amerced of Heaven.” To supply their vacant room and at the same time guard against the possibility of another revolt, God determined to create a World outside the bounds of Heaven, to place therein a new race of beings, and to train them in obedience before entrusting them with the powers and privileges of angels of Heaven.

### *The Creation and the Fall of Man.*

76. We have spoken of Heaven as situated in an upper region of space. All the space about and beneath it Milton conceived to be occupied by atoms such as, when properly combined, compose the four forms of matter known to man (see 4). But these atoms, existing from all eternity and waiting until it should be God's pleasure to make them useful, knew no law and had no fixed place or form, drifting aimlessly about in blackest darkness, the sport of chance. This is Milton's interpretation of the statement of the Hebrew writer in Genesis i. 1, 2: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” According to this interpretation, the process of creating the World began, not when the atoms of matter were brought into existence, but when the “Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” In Milton's story this Spirit is identified with the Son of God, lately appointed Regent of Heaven under the title of Messiah, and now deputed to bring into existence the new World.

“ ‘ Heaven opened wide  
 Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound  
 On golden hinges moving, to let forth  
 The King of Glory, in his powerful Word  
 And Spirit coming to create new worlds.’ ”

With golden compasses He first ascribed to the World its bounds, causing the atoms about the circumference to become compacted into the *Primum Mobile* (see 10), and the atoms within to cease their confused motion; then, on successive days He uttered the commands that wrought the atoms into orbs, continents and oceans, plants and animals, as we know them to-day.

77. On the first day,

“ Light  
 Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
 Sprung from the Deep, and from her native East  
 To journey through the aery gloom began,”

on the second the firmament of heaven spanned the sky, on the third the masses of land and water were differentiated, and vegetation sprang up in abundance. On the fourth the luminous bodies (sun, moon, and stars) were set in the firmament of heaven; on the fifth living creatures (fish and fowl) were created; on the sixth the higher animals, including man, crowned the work.

78. One man (Adam) and one woman (Eve) were created as ancestors of the human race. They were placed in a garden called Paradise, situated in the district of Eden, near the source of the river Euphrates, and over this garden they were given charge with the stipulation that they should refrain from eating of the fruit of one tree in this garden, called the “tree of knowledge of good and of evil.” In all other respects they were unhampered by commands, and until this one was disobeyed, no impulse to any other form of sin could enter their innocent minds. If, however, they should transgress this command, they were to suffer the penalty of death. Milton interprets this penalty as affecting all the descendants of the pair, through the law of heredity, and as being dual in nature. In the first place, it means physical death, since man was by nature immortal; secondly, it means moral death, or the death of all good in the soul, which thus becomes doomed to endless woe.

79. Meanwhile Satan, the leader of the rebels, had escaped from his prison (though not without the sufferance of the all-seeing Ruler of Heaven), and had made his way to the newly created World,

There, in the form of a serpent, he persuaded Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, and she persuaded her husband to follow her example. Their minds were instantly endowed with the power to recognize the nature of sin, and with that sense of shame which is sin's inevitable accompaniment. The Creator punished Adam with the necessity of unceasing and painful labor to support life, Eve with painful maternity and subjection to her husband, and both with immediate expulsion from the garden, and with ultimate death. But severity was tempered with mercy. It was promised that the "*Seed*" or *descendants* of the pair should one day "bruise the serpent's head."

80. Their earlier descendants, however, proved in time so sinful that all except one family, that of Noah, were destroyed by a flood. From the sons of Noah, after the flood, were traced three lines of descent, giving rise to three races, — the Semitic, the Hamitic, and the Japhetic peoples. Javan, the son of Japhet, was the reputed ancestor of the Ionian Greeks.

#### *The Hebrews.*

81. About two thousand years before the time of Christ, a descendant of Shem named Abram (afterward known as Abraham) migrated from Chaldea to Canaan with all the family of which he was the patriarchal head, and became the ancestor of the Hebrew people. He was held to have migrated under divine inspiration, and to have entered into a covenant with God, that in return for single-hearted worship on the part of Abraham and his seed, God should make of the Hebrew race a "chosen people," and should give the land of Canaan to them as a permanent possession.

82. Abraham was succeeded by his son Isaac, and the headship of the tribe should have passed in the next generation to Isaac's eldest son, Esau. The younger son, Jacob, however, by craft induced his aged and blind father unwittingly to confer upon him the "blessing" by which the leader of the tribe was consecrated. Then, not daring to abide his elder brother's anger, he fled from home, seeking the protection of his Uncle Laban, who dwelt in the district of Padan Aram, in Chaldea, until Esau's anger should have time to cool.

83. Esau was afterward appeased, and Jacob assumed the position of head of the tribe. While under the headship of Jacob



(otherwise called Israel), the tribe, now much enlarged, was driven by a long famine in Canaan to migrate to Egypt and take up its residence in Goshen, a fertile district in the eastern part of the delta of the Nile. Its members prospered and grew so numerous that the Egyptians, fearing that they would usurp control of the country, enslaved them and crushed them under burdensome tasks. At length God, remembering his covenant with Abraham, raised up for them a leader of their own race, Moses, to free them from bondage and restore them to Canaan, which had been pledged to Abraham and his seed as a permanent possession, and had therefore received the name of the Promised Land.

84. Moses was the son of a Hebrew priest named Amram, but was educated at the court of Egypt as the adopted son of the king's daughter. Having become liable to punishment for a homicide committed in defence of one of the Hebrew brethren, he fled into the wilderness beyond the Red Sea, and took service with his uncle as a shepherd on the range of mountains called Horeb. Here he lived for forty years, and during this long period (as Milton supposes) he wrote by divine inspiration those books of the Old Testament which describe the origin of the world. It was revealed to him that God was henceforth to be known to the Israelites under the new name of Jehovah.

85. At length, under divine direction, he returned to Egypt and summoned its ruler, or *Pharaoh*, to release the Hebrews from slavery. On his refusal, God, through Moses, brought upon Egypt a series of dire plagues, which were intended to strike terror into the hearts of the monarch and people. In the final one, all the first-born in the land, of both men and beasts, were struck dead in the night. As this included the animals that were worshipped as gods in Egypt, the Pharaoh was convinced that the God of Israel was mightier than the gods of Egypt, and he therefore promptly set the Israelites free.

86. (Omitted.)

87. After leaving Egypt the Israelites wandered for years in the wilderness of the peninsula of Sinai, during which time they developed the tribal organization for which their life of slavery had hitherto offered no opportunity. When they reached Mount Sinai, a peak of that Horeb range which had been the scene of Moses' life as a shepherd, they received from God the Ten Commandments



and a detailed code of laws, together with a complete ritual for the service of God.

88. The ordinances of the new religion were received from God by Moses, in secret, on the top of Mount Sinai. So long was he absent from the host, in communion with God, that the people (unfitted for self-control by their life of slavery) lost faith in him and his divine mission, constructed from the gold borrowed from the Egyptians an image of a calf, such as they had seen worshipped in Egypt, and worshipped it with pagan rites in imitation of the Egyptians. Jehovah, in anger at their ingratitude, condemned the tribe to wander in the wilderness until every man then living should perish and a new generation grow up to inherit the Holy Land.

89. With faith in Jehovah restored by the return of Moses, and sobered by their late experience, the people constructed a movable house of worship, called the "Tabernacle," and placed therein a holy chest, called the "Ark of the Covenant," containing their most sacred memorials of God's mercy to them during their wanderings. Above this chest was placed a seat of pure gold, called the "mercy seat." Two angelic figures, called "cherubim," wrought out of pure gold, were placed at the ends of the seat, their outstretched wings overarching so as to form a sort of canopy for the seat itself. The seat was revered as the very throne of Jehovah, — as his abiding-place when he was present to hear and answer the prayers of his chosen people. A special priesthood was consecrated, with Aaron, the brother of Moses, as High Priest. The vestments pertaining to this office were prescribed with great minuteness, as each part was intended to have a symbolic significance. Especially notable are the mitre<sup>1</sup> for the head, and the breastplate, set with twelve precious stones, and bearing the Urim and Thummim (objects, probably gems, having a mystic virtue).

90. For forty years this worship was kept up, while the people wandered about the desert, struggling against foes without and doubting within. Often they lost faith in their invisible Jehovah, and adopted the idol-worship of the nations among whom they wandered; but by stern punishments, conjoined with merciful

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<sup>1</sup> This term is now applied to the official headdress of a bishop in the Roman Catholic Church. In *Lycidas* it is attributed to St. Peter as the first and greatest bishop of the Church.

lenity, they were recalled to loyalty, and finally entered into possession of the Promised Land.

91. Even during the final stage of their migrations, while passing through the territory of the Moabites, and in plain view of their journey's end, they degraded themselves and angered Jehovah by adopting the worship of Peor, the native deity. This "wrought them woe," for they were attacked by a plague sent by Jehovah, which destroyed twenty-four thousand men.

92. Once in possession of Canaan, they became more thoroughly organized under the direction of a series of judges, whose authority was derived directly from Jehovah, and they entered upon a series of contests with the surrounding barbarous peoples. Especially spirited were their struggles with the Philistines, a tribe living on the seacoast. On one occasion the Ark of the Covenant was taken into battle against these foes, in the hope that the divine power of God, which was supposed to reside in it, might turn the scale of battle in favor of the Israelites. Jehovah, in displeasure at their presumption, allowed their enemies to win the victory and capture the sacred Ark. This was carried into Ashdod, and set up as a trophy in the temple of the Philistines' fish-god, Dagon. But the presumption of the Philistines was likewise punished; for the priests, on entering the temple the next morning, found Dagon lying prone on the floor before the Ark of God. He was restored to his place, but the next morning he was found prostrate on the threshold of his temple, with head and hands lopped off. The Philistines, in awe of a deity so much more powerful than their own, restored the Ark to the Israelites.

93. Later, a regularly organized kingdom succeeded the government by judges. Jerusalem was selected as the capital city, and there the main features of the Tabernacle were repeated in a permanent Temple, in which was placed the Ark. The city of Jerusalem occupied an elevation having two crests, Mount Zion (Sion) and Mount Moriah, the latter being the site of the temple mentioned above. King Solomon, the builder of the Temple, although endowed by God with especial wisdom for his high duties, attempted to strengthen his kingdom politically by contracting marriage alliances with princesses of the surrounding heathen nations. To please these wives he allowed the worship of their local gods to be established in the valley of Hinnom, which lies southwest

of the city, and a later king extended the idolatrous worship even into the courts of the temple of Jehovah on Mount Moriah.

94. This worship often consisted of revolting and cruel rites; in the case of the god Moloch, it included the sacrifice of children, while drums were beaten to drown their cries of agony. From these drums (Tophim) the place received the name Tophet. Still later, King Josiah purified the land of idol-worship. He assured its discontinuance in the valley of Hinnom by using that valley as a place for cremating the bodies of the dead, and his successors made it the receptacle for the offal from the city. The spot thus became doubly opprobrious to the Israelites, from its pollution with idols and with filth.

95. The religious history of Israel from the days of Solomon to the time of Christ was marked by the same lapses of faith, the same corruption of worship, and the same reaction to the purer religion. From time to time monarchs like Ahab, having by conquest or by peaceful intercourse with neighboring states come into acquaintance with other religions, adopted the worship of foreign gods as supplementary to their own. But although the kings were easily led astray, prophets arose from time to time, who condemned the alienation of the race from the true God and denounced woes upon the unfaithful monarch and nation.

96. Not all of these, like Ezekiel, denounced the woes to come. Some, like Isaiah, bore a message of a new and better time, when a leader should appear under whose inspiration the wavering should be established, the doubting faith be confirmed, and the evil be purged from God's children. After many years of trouble such a leader appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In his poems Milton expresses his belief that Christ was that same Messiah who expelled Satan's host from Heaven, now in another guise encountering his old foe, to complete by his temptation, and death on the cross, the victory foreshadowed in that earlier triumph. (See 75.)

97. But why was a second victory necessary? Why should a just and kind God allow Satan to escape from Hell and lead men astray as we have seen that he did? This was for centuries the one unsolvable problem of the Christian theology. Milton's solution, in the briefest possible statement, is as follows:—

a. Character is worthless until it has been made robust by temptation strongly and voluntarily resisted. Man was placed on earth

that he might develop a robust character. Therefore he must be free to sin, and must be *exposed* to temptation.

b. Temptation could come to a sinless being only from without. Therefore Satan must be permitted to have access to man.

c. God is both just and merciful: justice requires a penalty for sin, and mercy permits a loving friend to pay the penalty for the sinner, *if the sinner is brought through his friend's unselfish sacrifice to the same hatred for sin, and the same strength to resist temptation, that he would attain by paying the penalty himself.* Therefore, God permitted his Son, moved by divine love for the sinful race of men, to take upon himself their life and their temptations, and ultimately to die in their stead.

d. God's *Providence* (= foresight) perceived all this train of events from the beginning. Nothing was the effect of chance, for God knew that man would fall into sin and Satan would seem to triumph, but he also knew that to man he should ultimately give the victory through his Son, and that the redeemed race, because of its experience on earth, would in the end be more worthy to dwell with him in Heaven than the angels whose place was now forfeited had ever been.

## MINOR POEMS





## INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR POEMS.

### *Their History.*

THE lyric poems of Milton were among the earlier fruits of his genius. In them he was consciously testing his powers and strengthening his poetic faculties for the more ambitious work which was to be the product of his maturer years. Yet they bear few of the marks of experiments, but rather exhibit the characteristics of carefully planned and finished works. They are worthy of serious study, not only for this reason, but also because they are remarkably varied in character and exemplify some of the most important literary types, and because each poem stands in a significant relation to the circumstances of the poet's life and thought at the time it was written.

Thus, it is significant that Milton's first outburst of high and sustained poetic expression, the *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, should have been conceived on Christmas morning in the year that he reached manhood, and that he should have chosen for his theme the advent of Christ upon the earth to begin that work of redemption which inspired the great epics of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. It is not without significance that *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* should have been written at a time when Milton was pondering the course of life which he should pursue, with the fullest consciousness that a wise decision regarding the conduct of life was a duty laid upon him by God, of supreme moment to his eternal future, not to be settled without "long choosing." So *Lycidas* and *Comus*, although called into being by special circumstances, served as a medium for the expression of the

poet's mood in the years when his scrutiny of the social, religious, and political world about him was leading him to adopt a tone of adverse criticism, and his conviction of his own high calling to "assert eternal Providence" in an age of indifference and irreligion was becoming daily more intense.

The form, no less than the themes and the spirit, of these poems bears a distinct relation to the circumstances of their production. At the time the *Hymn* was written (1629), Milton had been pursuing his studies for four years, for the most part steadily resisting any temptation to produce crude and immature verses, awaiting with patience the work of the "mellowing year" upon his intellect and spirit. He had abundant faith in himself as a poet inspired of God, and he was content to let the inward power become slowly manifest, to remain silent until the inward light should irradiate his mind and the inner force compel utterance. Meanwhile he was busily storing his mind with the ideas and expressions of the great poets of antiquity, delving among the treasures of the classics, and familiarizing himself with the literary forms employed by the masters of the art of poetry.

It is essential that the student of Milton's poetry should endeavor to gain a clear conception of the conditions of intellectual life which prevailed among the scholars of his day. The Renaissance movement had had the effect of displacing the study of formal logic and metaphysics from the dominating position which it had held during the Middle Ages, in favor of the study of the Greek and Latin classics. This study now almost wholly absorbed the attention of the students at Oxford and Cambridge. Not only to read these classics with freedom, but also to converse in the dead languages with the same fluency as in the mother tongue, to master their finest subtleties of expression and their profoundest depths of esoteric meaning, to form habits of thought moulded by constant intercourse with the writers that had made Greek

literature the model of elegant and precise expression, — such were the aims of University students in Milton's day.

The Pindaric Odes, with their triumphant celebration of victories won through the exercise of self-restraint, persistent effort, and piety; the fiery or tender lyrics of Alcæus; the grim tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; the lively comedies of Aristophanes; and the works of their Latin successors and imitators; — these formed the staple of intellectual training. In particular, by the study of Plato, by pondering over his mystic doctrines of the immortality of the soul, of the presence of spiritual beings in all the realms and processes of Nature, of the circling spheres of the physical universe, the student was habituated to employ in his thought of the world terms and concepts characteristic of the *scholar* as distinguished from the man of affairs. This severe training was, however, supplemented by studies in lighter themes. In the works of Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, Virgil, he learned to contemplate Nature in the aspect which she presents to the simple minds of rustics; and in the works of Ovid, Horace, and Catullus, he touched the lighter and more joyous side of existence.

The fruits of this course of study are clearly evident in the *Hymn*, composed when but four of Milton's seven years of University life were completed. They are equally evident in *L'Allegro* and its successors, all composed at Horton, a village near Windsor, whither Milton retired in 1632 for five years of private study. Here, in a village where ready communication with the metropolis tempered the native simplicity of English rural life, Milton had no incentive to sever the academic from the idyllic in his writings; for not only did he continue his reading of the classics, but he also pursued the study of the Italian and French literatures, with their abundance of pastoral compositions, and when he strayed abroad for air and exercise, he could hardly avoid gazing upon Nature through

the eyes of the poets whose works he was engaged in mastering.

Seventeen Latin and fourteen English poems had been the fruits of his creative activity while in the University. These were almost all brief, many of them belonging to the class of occasional verse; only one, if we except one or two sonnets, had in it the elements of genius. All were evidently tentative flights, in which the poet was testing the strength of his pinions, and finding them insufficient to lift him far from the ground. But in Horton, while the compositions are fewer in number, the flight is no longer wavering and uncertain, but high and sustained. The lyric quality of the Horton poems is unmistakably fine, although not sufficiently so to satisfy the severe self-criticism of the poet, who regretted that so many fruits must be plucked "before their season due."

But that season never came. Before another lyric was essayed, came the blighting sirocco of the Great Rebellion, and in the hot breath of war the lyric blossoms faded "timelessly," so that occasional sonnets form Milton's sole poetic utterances in English from 1637, the date of the *Lycidas*, until he began to work continuously upon his great epic in 1657.

### *Lyric Types.*

Each of the poems in this volume should be viewed as exemplifying a distinctive type of literary production, yet all have a certain kinship, in so far as they partake of a common lyric quality. From time immemorial, poetry has been classified under the head of lyric, epic, and dramatic (sung, chanted or spoken, acted). Students of Poetics, following out the suggestion contained in the derivation of these words, have classed as technical epic poems all those which clearly aim at information, description, philosophic reflection, instruction, or narration of events; and they have recognized in the first class the predominance of emotion, in the second that of



intellect, and in the third that of the expression of character through conduct. The literary world, however, has parted company with the theorists, in that it tends to restrict the use of the word "epic" to members of that narrow class of "grand epic," of which *Paradise Lost* is an example. It recognizes that in such poems as *L'Allegro*, where the description of attractive scenes is apparently the chief feature, the poet's real aim is not to impress the *mind* of the reader with the *facts* in the picture, but to move his *sensibilities* with the *emotion* which the scene has roused in himself; and it rightly conceives such poems to be essentially lyric in character. Even *Comus*, which is indisputably dramatic in form, is almost wholly undramatic in quality. The characters utter dissertations on virtue and vice, they narrate what has happened and even what is happening, they explain and describe instead of simply presenting themselves as living agents before the observation of the audience; and when one scrutinizes their utterances, he discovers the explanation of these facts to be that Milton's native instinct and impulse at this time were essentially toward lyric expression, and that consequently each bit of description or of moralizing is surcharged with the emotional element, and the whole drama is made up of a series of lyric passages. It seems therefore desirable, in the study of Milton's minor poems, to concentrate the attention upon those features which are most strongly in contrast with the characteristic features in *Paradise Lost*, and to study them as examples of the pure lyric and its closely related forms.

The theory of the genesis of a primitive lyric might be set forth somewhat as follows: At the moment of inception of a lyric poem, the mind of its author is taken possession of by some conception which rouses his enthusiasm and demands artistic expression in musical form. He seizes his lyre, and pours forth his verses in a torrent of fiery or melting song, which is guided in its course by the musical

accompaniment of chords struck from time to time on the instrument, until the passion is spent, the demand for expression appeased. The themes, therefore, with which lyric poetry deals, are naturally those of love, of martial ardor, of patriotism, of mirth, of religious exaltation. In treatment it demands, above all things, unity; that is, the stanzas, whether few or many, must all combine to give expression to a single dominant emotion or idea. Furthermore, it should be primarily subjective; that is, the poem should be written for the purpose of expressing what the author himself feels,—it should be a means of self-revelation. Again, it should be brief and intense. If the emotion be capable of being sustained unflinching, or of being diluted, through many pages of verse, it is either too massive or not sufficiently intense to inspire a genuine lyric, and some other poetic form is manifestly preferable. The emotional character of the lyric further necessitates that its language shall be highly ornamented and figurative, because the human mind, in a state of excitement, inevitably busies itself in bringing ideas into novel relations, in constructing fresh images for familiar objects, in searching out fanciful analogies between things essentially unlike. And finally, the form and the expression must be rhythmical and melodious. The grand rhythm is generally obtained through identical stanzaic divisions, the minor rhythms through specific verse forms within the stanza, and the still subtler waves of rhythm through the minute variations from the norm of the verse, which justify themselves to the ear, although they defy formal analysis.

Thus, in reading these poems, the student should be prepared to observe, besides the universal poetic qualities of beauty of form and of conception, elevation of thought and spiritual insight, the specific lyric qualities of emotional intensity, unity of conception, brevity of treatment, profusion and splendor of adornment, and subjectivity of attitude on the part of the author.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE HYMN ON THE NATIVITY.

### *General Characteristics.*

THE *Hymn* may be reckoned the first fully opened flower of Milton's poetic springtime. It was produced, evidently without overmuch labor, at Christmas time in the year 1629, when he was but two weeks past his twenty-first birthday; and it seems to have been conceived as a Christmas offering to the Deity who had brought him safely to manhood's estate, and to whose service his poetic gifts were to be wholly dedicated. In its unique form, in its elastic freedom regarding both choice of epithet and method of treating the theme, in the use of unconventional epithet, and in the elasticity of the versification, it would appear to be the production of a master-workman rather than of a prentice hand.

It would be difficult to find a poem that would better exemplify certain of the characteristics of a lyric poem than does the *Hymn on the Nativity*. The religious fervor of the young poet informs every stanza of the poem; the pictures are painted for their dynamic emotional value only; the language is adorned with "rich and various gems" of expression; the sentiment is elevated; the metrical form is graceful and harmonious with the thought; and the poem is prolonged only sufficiently to allow the wave of emotion to swell and recede through all its successive phases, from a state of happy anticipation of the blessings soon to be received, through their realization in prophetic imagination, back to the state of peaceful calm that flows from communion with divine things.

*Structure.*

The logical structure of the poem is interesting, but not intricate. Of the two parts, the Introduction and the Hymn proper, the first sets forth the reflections which have moved the poet to lyric expression, and the second contains the lyric outburst itself. In the Introduction, Milton shows how the thought of the infinite condescension shown by Christ in leaving "the courts of everlasting day" to "bring our great redemption from above" moves his mind to gratitude, and how the memory of the behavior of the "star-led wizards" spurs him to emulate their action by laying some tribute before the "Son of Heaven's eternal King." The contemplation of the Nativity carries Milton through phases of emotion, the expression of each of which constitutes one element in the structure of the Hymn. The first is that of remorse and shame over the human guilt which makes necessary such a sacrifice as this; the second is that of a sense of blessedness in the expected beneficent reign of Christ upon earth; the third is a mood of constantly swelling exultation, as the magnitude of the honor conferred upon man and the mighty import of the event becomes more adequately realized, with its promise of the disappearance of sin on the one hand, and of error and ignorance (typified by the pagan gods) on the other; with the reaction from this exalted prophetic strain comes the realization of the present actuality, and the mood changes to one of tenderness in the contemplation of the babe as yet helpless through his newly-accepted humanity, and dependent upon the care of his mother, even though attended by multitudes of "bright-harnessed angels."

*Metrical Form.*

In its metrical form the *Hymn* illustrates the wide freedom of choice which is allowed the lyric poet. A distinct verse

structure, of course, is involved in the very conception of poetry. Rhyme, on the other hand, is so far from being essential, that it is admitted to be foreign to the genius of the grand epic. It is, however, almost indispensable in a lyric, but the order of the rhyme is wholly a matter of choice with the poet. If the lyric contains more than a dozen lines, division into stanzas is the natural result, as in the *Hymn*. On the form of the stanza poets have exhausted all the resources of invention, the Italians and the French proving especially ingenious in constructing novel and pleasing stanza-forms, and the English being content to adopt these forms with slight variations. Thus the metrical units of the *Hymn* are derived from Italian models.

The favorite Italian stanza during the Middle Ages was that consisting of eight lines of iambic pentameter. The idea of this stanza was borrowed and employed extensively by Chaucer (1340-1400), but he introduced a radical and essentially poetical modification, in his stanza called "Reine Royale." He reduced the number of lines from eight to seven, and adopted such a rhyme-order as to produce an intricate double symmetry. Thus, if the first four lines be taken by themselves, they are found to constitute a symmetrical, alternately rhymed group, of the type *a, b; a, b*. Again, if the last four lines are considered by themselves, they are likewise found to constitute a symmetrical group, but consecutively rhymed, of the type *b, b; c, c*. The fourth line, being common to both groups, has a rhyming counterpart in each group, and serves to bind the whole stanza into unity. Spenser (1552-1599) invented kindred forms with interlocked rhymes, and notably, the "Spenserian Stanza" employed in *The Faerie Queene*. This famous stanza consists of twin groups of four pentameter lines connected by a tie rhyme (*a, b; a, b; b, c; b, c*), and a ninth line which repeats the last rhyme sound (*c*) and contains an additional foot. The effect of the extra length of the



closing line is to give an elegance, a dignity, and a completeness to the stanza which are unsurpassed in any other type.

For the Introduction to the *Hymn*, Milton combined the most unique and poetical feature of Spenser's verse, the closing hexameter, with the symmetrical rhyme-order of Chaucer, thus producing the stanza-form here exemplified: —

"This is the month, and this the happy **morn**, (5 x a)  
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal **King**, (5 x b)  
Of wedded maid and virgin mother **born**, (5 x a)  
Our great redemption from above did **bring**; (5 x b)  
For so the holy sages once did **sing** (5 x b)  
That he our deadly forfeit should **release**, (5 x c)  
And with his Father work us a perpetual **peace**." (6 x c)

The stanzaic structure in the body of the *Hymn* is wholly Milton's invention, and is singularly beautiful. It consists normally of three parts, — two pairs of rhymed iambic trimeter lines, each pair being followed by a single pentameter line (these lines themselves constituting a rhymed pair), and a concluding rhymed couplet consisting of a tetrameter and a hexameter line. Thus the stanza falls naturally into halves, the pairs in the first and the last half faintly recalling those in the stanzas of the Introduction, while the closing hexameter, common to both Introduction and Hymn, serves still further to give unity to the whole poem from the standpoint of metrical construction. The form may be illustrated by the following stanza: —

The stars with deep amaze (3 x a)  
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze, (3 x a)  
    Bending one way their precious influence, (5 x b)  
And will not take their flight, (3 x c)  
For all the morning light, (3 x c)  
    Or Lucifer that often warned them thence, (5 x b)  
But in their glimmering orbs did glow (4 x d)  
Until their Lord himself bespake and bid them go. (6 x d)

## MINOR POEMS OF MILTON.

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### ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

#### I.

THIS is the month and this the happy morn,  
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,<sup>1</sup>  
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring;  
For so the holy sages once did sing 5  
That he our deadly forfeit should release,<sup>2</sup>  
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

#### II.

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,  
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,  
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table 10  
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,  
He laid aside; and, here with us to be,  
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,  
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

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<sup>1</sup> 71, 74.

<sup>2</sup> 96, 97.

## III.

Say,\* Heavenly Muse,<sup>1</sup> shall not thy sacred vein      15  
 Afford a present to the Infant God?  
 Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain  
 To welcome him to this his new abode,  
 Now while the heaven, by the Sun's team<sup>2</sup> untrod,  
 Hath took no print of the approaching light,      20  
 And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

## IV.

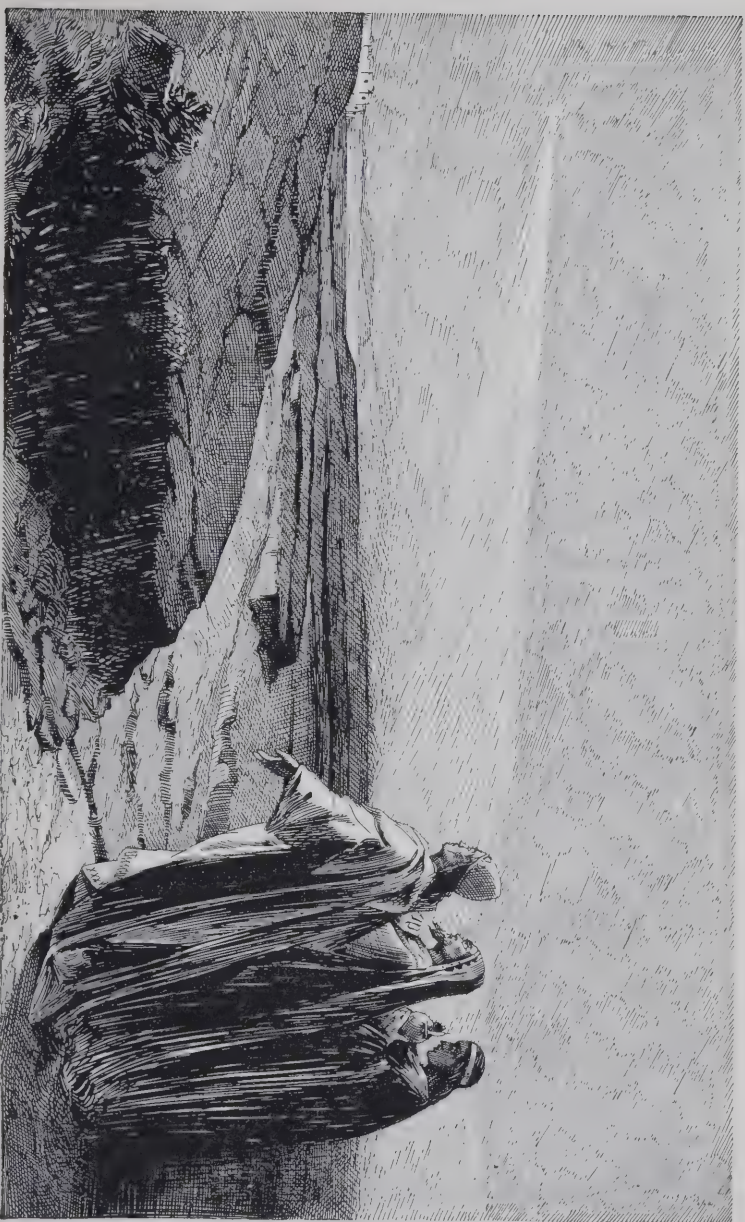
See how from far, upon the eastern road,  
 The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet;  
 O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,  
 And lay it lowly at his blessed feet!      25  
 Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,  
 And join thy voice unto the angel quire,  
 From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

## THE HYMN.

## I.

It was the winter wild,  
 While the Heaven-born Child      30  
 All meanly wrapped in the rude manger lies;  
 Nature in awe to him  
 Had doffed her gaudy trim,  
 With her great Master so to sympathize:  
 It was no season then for her      35  
 To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

<sup>1</sup> 36.<sup>2</sup> 38, 21.\* *P. L.* I. 6.



“See how from far upon the eastern road  
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet.”





## II.

Only with speeches fair

She woos the gentle air

To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,

And on her naked shame,

40

Pollute with sinful blame,

The saintly veil of maiden white to throw ;

Confounded, that her Maker's eyes

Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

## III.

But he, her fears to cease,

45

Sent down the meek-eyed Peace ;

She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding

Down through the turning sphere,<sup>1</sup>

His ready harbinger,

With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing ;

50

And, waving wide her myrtle wand,

She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

## IV.

No war or battle's sound

Was heard the world around :

The idle spear and shield were high uphung,

55

The hookèd chariot stood

Unstained with hostile blood,

The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng ;

And kings sat still with awful eye,

As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

60

## V.

But peaceful was the night  
Wherein the Prince of Light

His reign of peace upon the earth began ;  
The winds with wonder whist  
Smoothly the waters kissed,

65

Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

## VI.

The stars with deep amaze  
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,

70

Bending one way their precious influence,<sup>1</sup>  
And will not take their flight,  
For all the morning light,

Or Lucifer<sup>2</sup> that often warned them thence,  
But in their glimmering orbs did glow  
Until their Lord himself bespake and bid them go.

75

## VII.

And though the shady gloom  
Had given day her room,

The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,  
And hid his head for shame,  
As his inferior flame

80

The new-enlightened world no more should need :  
He saw a greater Sun appear  
Than his bright throne or burning axletree<sup>3</sup> could bear.

<sup>1</sup> 16.<sup>2</sup> 14, end.<sup>3</sup> 38.

## VIII.

The shepherds on the lawn, 85  
 Or ere the point of dawn,  
     Sat simply chatting in a rustic row ;  
 Full little thought they than  
 That the mighty Pan<sup>1</sup>  
     Was kindly come to live with them below ; 90  
 Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,  
 Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

## IX.

When such music sweet  
 Their hearts and ears did greet  
     As never was by mortal finger strook, 95  
 Divinely-warbled voice  
 Answering the stringèd noise,  
     As all their souls in blissful rapture took ;  
 The air, such pleasure loath to lose,  
 With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

## X.

Nature, that heard such sound 101  
 Beneath the hollow round  
     Of Cynthia's<sup>2</sup> seat the airy region thrilling,  
 Now was almost won  
 To think her part was done, 105  
     And that her reign had here its last fulfilling ;  
 She knew such harmony alone  
 Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

<sup>1</sup> 51, and Glossary.<sup>2</sup> 37, 43.

## XI.

At last surrounds their sight  
 A globe of circular light, 110  
 That with long beams the shamefaced Night arrayed ;  
 The helmèd Cherubim<sup>1</sup>  
 And sworded Seraphim  
 Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,  
 Harping in loud and solemn quire, 115  
 With unexpressive \* notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

## XII.

Such music, as 'tis said,  
 Before was never made,  
 But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,  
 While the Creator<sup>2</sup> great 120  
 His constellations<sup>3</sup> set,  
 And the well-balanced world † on hinges hung,  
 And cast the dark foundations deep,  
 And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep. §

## XIII.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres !<sup>4</sup> 125  
 Once bless our human ears,  
 If ye have power to touch our senses so ;  
 And let your silver chime  
 Move in melodious time,  
 And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow ; 130  
 And with your ninefold harmony  
 Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

<sup>1</sup> 72.<sup>2</sup> 76, 77.<sup>3</sup> 12.<sup>4</sup> 9, 10, note.\* *Lycidas*, 176.† *P. L.* VII. 242.§ *Ibid.* 276-284.

## XIV.

For if such holy song  
 Enwrap our fancy long,  
     Time will run back and fetch the age of gold ;<sup>1</sup> 135  
 And speckled Vanity  
 Will sicken soon and die,  
     And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould ;  
 And Hell itself will pass away,  
 And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day. 140

## XV.

Yea, Truth and Justice then  
 Will down return to men,  
     Orbed in a rainbow ; and, like glories wearing,  
 Mercy will sit between,  
 Throned in celestial sheen, 145  
     With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering ;  
 And heaven, as at some festival,  
 Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

## XVI.

But wisest Fate<sup>2</sup> says, No ;  
 This must not yet be so ; 150  
     The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy  
 That on the bitter cross  
 Must redeem our loss,  
     So both himself and us to glorify ;  
 Yet first, to those ychained in sleep, 155  
 The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the  
     deep

<sup>1</sup> 31.<sup>2</sup> 54.



## XVII.

With such a horrid clang  
As on Mount Sinai<sup>1</sup> rang,

While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake :  
The aged Earth, aghast 160  
With terror of that blast,

Shall from the surface to the centre shake,  
When at the world's last session  
The dreadful Judge in middle air\* shall spread his throne.

## XVIII.

And then at last our bliss 165  
Full and perfect is,

But now begins ; for from this happy day  
The old Dragon,<sup>2</sup> under ground  
In straiter limits bound,

Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway, 170  
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,  
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

## XIX.

The oracles are dumb :  
No voice or hideous hum

Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving ; 175  
Apollo from his shrine  
Can no more divine,

With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos<sup>3</sup> leaving ;  
No nightly trance or breathed spell  
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell. 180

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<sup>1</sup> 87, 88.

<sup>2</sup> See Glossary, under "Apocalypse."

<sup>3</sup> 39.

\* *P. L. I.* 516.

## XX.

The lonely mountains o'er,  
 And the resounding shore,  
     A voice of weeping heard and loud lament ;  
 From haunted spring and dale  
 Edged with poplar pale, 185  
     The parting Genius<sup>1</sup> is with sighing sent ,  
 With flower-inwoven tresses torn  
 The Nymphs<sup>1</sup> in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

## XXI.

In consecrated earth,  
 And on the holy hearth, 190  
     The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint ;  
 In urns and altars round,  
 A drear and dying sound  
     Affrights the flamens at their service quaint ;  
 And the chill marble seems to sweat, 195  
 While each peculiar Power foregoes his wonted seat.

## XXII.

Peor<sup>2</sup> and Baälim \*  
 Forsake their temples dim,  
     With that twice-battered god † of Palestine<sup>3</sup> ;  
 And moonèd Ashtaroth,\* 200  
 Heaven's queen§ and mother both,  
     Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine ;

<sup>1</sup> 51.\* *P. L. I.* 422.<sup>2</sup> 91.† *Ibid.* 457-466.<sup>3</sup> 92.§ *Ibid.* 439.

The Lybic Hammon<sup>1</sup> shrinks his horn ;  
 In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz<sup>2</sup>  
       mourn.\*

## XXIII.

And sullen Moloch,<sup>3</sup> fled, 205  
 Hath left in shadows dread  
       His burning idol all of blackest hue ;  
 In vain with cymbals' ring  
 They call the grisly king,  
       In dismal dance about the furnace blue : † 210  
 The brutish gods of Nile as fast,  
 Isis<sup>1</sup> and Orus<sup>1</sup> and the dog Anubis,<sup>1</sup> haste.

## XXIV.

Nor is Osiris<sup>1</sup> seen  
 In Memphian grove or green,  
       Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud ; 215  
 Nor can he be at rest  
 Within his sacred chest ;  
       Nought but profoundest hell can be his shroud ;  
 In vain with timbrelled anthems dark  
 The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshipped ark. 220

## XXV.

He feels from Juda's land  
 The dreaded Infant's hand ;  
       The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyne ;

<sup>1</sup> 55.<sup>2</sup> 47.<sup>3</sup> 94.\* *P. L. I.* 446-452.† *Ibid.* 392 +

Nor all the gods beside

Longer dare abide,

225

Not Typhon<sup>1</sup> huge ending in snaky twine :

Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,

Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

## XXVI.

So when the sun in bed,

Curtained with cloudy red,

230

Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,

The flocking shadows pale

Troop to the infernal jail,

Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,<sup>2</sup>

And the yellow-skirted fays

235

Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.<sup>3</sup>

## XXVII.

But see ! the Virgin blest

Hath laid her Babe to rest ;

Time is our tedious song should here have ending :

Heaven's youngest-teemèd star

240

Hath fixed her polished car,

Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending ;

And all about the courtly stable

Bright-harnessed angels sit in order serviceable.

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<sup>1</sup> 55, 32.

<sup>2</sup> 18.

<sup>3</sup> 19.

## INTRODUCTION TO L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENNEROSO.

### *General Characteristics.*

ALTHOUGH *L'Allegro* and *Il Penneroso* are often classed as lyric poems, they exhibit, in some respects, a departure from the normal lyric type. They apparently aim rather at description than at emotional expression; they seem to be the fruit rather of calm contemplation than of passionate experience; they exhibit no ebb and flow of feeling; and although they have well-marked lines of cleavage, they are not formally divided into stanzas. While they deal with moods (*i.e.* with emotional states), they deal with them from the standpoint of the observer who stands aloof from that which he describes; in other words, the treatment is objective not subjective, as in a pure lyric. At the same time, in brevity, in essential unity of theme, in the highly imaginative treatment of certain portions, in exquisitely melodious rhythmic effects, they exhibit an undoubted lyric quality.

It would seem not wholly unwarrantable to consider *L'Allegro* and *Il Penneroso* as virtually two divisions of a single poem, which might be entitled "The Ideal Life." They have often been represented to be the expression of two mutually exclusive ideals of life, that of the jovial and that of the melancholy man, but this interpretation is radically misleading. The character of the hypothetical subject of these experiences is the same for both poems, — a cultivated, educated, refined man, of scholarly tastes and leisure to indulge them; a man who eschews an unhealthy pessimism on the one



hand and a trifling or vapid and aimless hilarity on the other. He is sometimes in a frame of mind that leads him to seek enlivening social intercourse ( "L'Allegro" = the cheerful [man] ), and sometimes in one that leads him to seek communion with all that is most serious in himself and in his fellow-men, and consequently to withdraw from the "various bustle of resort" ( "Il Penseroso," = the contemplative [man] ). The poet does not set before himself the alternative of living *wholly* with either the "goddess fair and free" or the "goddess sage and holy"; what he does intend is, in his livelier moods to shun "vain, deluding Joys, the brood of Folly," and in his more serious moods to avoid that "loathèd Melancholy" which is attended by "horrid shapes and shrieks and sights unholy." "With thee, Mirth," he declares, "and *also* with thee, Melancholy, if ye can give these delights and these pleasures, *I intend to live.*"

#### *Structure.*

It is of course self-evident that the two moods depicted could not dominate the mind of the subject at the same time, and this fact indicated to the poet the appropriate method of treatment, which was, to delineate in a double series of pictures typical scenes adapted to give pleasure to a person in the given mood, but repugnant to him when in the complementary mood. These scenes follow the logical order of time for the twenty-four hour period following the opening scene, and also (but less obviously) an order suggestive of the change in tastes and inclinations which comes with the transition from early to late manhood. Indeed, the minutest details in the structure of the poem are logically determined by these considerations. It seems almost inevitable that the poet should begin by rejecting those lines of behavior which are foreign to the nature of a man living the ideal life, and announcing the mood with which the scenes that follow are

in harmony. It is also logical that in developing the series of pictures he should begin in each case with the time of day when the given mood is most likely to arise (the day of *L'Allegro* extending from dawn to midnight, and that of *Il Penseroso* extending from sunset to mid-noon). With this exception, the poems are almost exact counterparts. Each reviews in turn the charms of rural and then of urban life; each treats of pleasures enjoyed in isolation, then of those shared with comrades, of active and of passive enjoyments; each touches first upon the unstudied pleasures derived from Nature and from spontaneous impulses, and then upon those which are dependent upon Art. Throughout the 150 lines in the body of the poem of *L'Allegro* and the corresponding 166 lines in *Il Penseroso*, the balance is held with a perfectly even hand. But then something like a prophetic strain replaces that of contemplation, and the poet adds a concluding picture which may be considered as a finale to the compound poem. In this, his vision penetrates beyond the present into the future, and he foresees that in the autumn of life the second of the two moods will become more and more increasingly recurrent and insistent, until it becomes wholly dominant, and finds its satisfaction in the repose and isolation of the hermit's cell.

#### *Metrical Form.*

The metrical form of the poems is skilfully chosen so as to harmonize with the subject-matter. The introductory addresses to "Melancholy" and to "Vain deluding Joys," which constitute distinct structural units, are also so distinctive in form as virtually to constitute separate stanzas. The metrical scheme for these is of the following type: The lines are iambic, alternating between trimeter and pentameter. The order of the rhymes is unique, and at the first glance seems irregular and arbitrary; but by indicating the symmetrical features of the rhyme scheme as follows,—

$$a—b, b—a; \quad c—d, d, e, e—c$$

it becomes evident that the second group is in close structural relation to the first. The remaining portions of the poems are not divided into stanzas, and the artistic reason for this treatment is evident. The successive scenes are intended to pass in panoramic flow before the mental eye, like the phantasmagoria of a dream, where each illusion merges insensibly into the next.

In regard to the metre of these portions the student will find that “doctors disagree.” Many editors assert that the metre of *L'Allegro* is trochaic. If, however, it be admitted that the metre of a poem is determinable from the character of its predominant verse, as that of a single verse is determined from its predominant foot (and the contrary hypothesis is absurd), then both *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are written in iambic tetrameter. Of the 152 lines in *L'Allegro*, 81 (or more than half) are indisputably iambic, with the characteristic weak first and stressed final syllables; 21 are iambic except in the first foot, where the variation characteristic of flexibly constructed iambic verse occurs, namely, the reversal of the stress in that foot, the four others remaining normal; only 12 have the unstressed ending characteristic of trochaic metre; and only 5 of the entire 152 can be scanned as perfect trochaic lines. The evidence could hardly be stronger, that the remaining lines (constituting less than a third in amount), which both begin and end with a stressed syllable, should be classed as iambic lines with the weak initial syllable wanting.

The principal variation from the normal metrical type in which Milton indulges is the substitution of a trochee for the initial iambus of a line, or the omission of the opening unaccented syllable. This device is very skilfully used where vigor (*e.g.* in the lines, “Hénce, loathèd Melancholy,” “Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,” “Scatters the ear of darkness thin,”) or where vivacity (*e.g.* in the lines,

“Háste thee, nymph, and bring with thee, jést and youthful Jollity,” “Cóme, and trip it as you go,” ) is to be gained by the more abrupt beginning. No better exercise for training the ear to a perception of the finer harmonies of verse can be found than to read the lines of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* metrically, with the attention directed toward detecting the subtle adaptation of the movement to the varying shades of feeling expressed by the poet.

## L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE, loathèd Melancholy,  
Of Cerberus<sup>1</sup> and blackest Midnight born  
In Stygian<sup>1</sup> cave forlorn,  
'Mongst horrid shapes and shrieks and sights unholy !  
Find out some uncouth cell, 5  
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings  
And the night-raven sings ;  
There under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,  
As ragged as thy locks,  
In dark Cimmerian<sup>2</sup> desert ever dwell. 10

But come, thou Goddess fair and free,  
In Heaven yclept Euphrosyne,<sup>3</sup>  
And by men heart-easing Mirth,  
Whom lovely Venus,<sup>4</sup> at a birth,  
With two sister Graces more 15  
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus<sup>5</sup> bore ;  
Or whether — as some sager sing —  
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,  
Zephyr, with Aurora<sup>6</sup> playing,  
As he met her once a-Maying, 20  
There, on beds of violets blue,  
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,  
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,  
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.

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<sup>1</sup> 23.

<sup>2</sup> 68, end.

<sup>3</sup> 52, end.

<sup>4</sup> 46.

<sup>5</sup> 53.

<sup>6</sup> 28.



Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee 25  
 Jest and youthful Jollity,  
 Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,  
 Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,  
 Such as hang on Hebe's<sup>1</sup> cheek,  
 And love to live in dimple sleek, 30  
 Sport that wrinkled Care derides,  
 And Laughter holding both his sides.  
 Come, and trip it as you go,  
 On the light fantastic toe ; \*  
 And in thy right hand lead with thee 35  
 The mountain nymph,<sup>2</sup> sweet Liberty ;  
 And if I give thee honour due,  
 Mirth, admit me of thy crew,  
 To live with her and live with thee,  
 In unprovèd pleasures free : 40  
 To hear the lark begin his flight,  
 And singing startle the dull night,  
 From his watch-tower in the skies,  
 Till the dappled dawn doth rise ;  
 Then to come in spite of sorrow, 45  
 And at my window bid good-morrow,  
 Through the sweet-briar or the vine,  
 Or the twisted eglantine ;  
 While the cock with lively din  
 Scatters the rear of darkness thin, 50  
 And to the stack or the barn-door  
 Stoutly struts his dames before ;  
 Oft listening how the hounds and horn

<sup>1</sup> 33.<sup>2</sup> 51.\* *Comus*, 143, 144.

Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill, 55  
Through the high wood echoing shrill :  
Sometime walking, not unseen,  
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,  
Right against the eastern gate  
Where the great Sun begins his state, 60  
Robed in flames and amber light,  
The clouds in thousand liveries dight ;  
While the ploughman near at hand  
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe, 65  
And the mower whets his scythe,  
And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures  
Whilst the landscape round it measures : 70  
Russet lawns and fallows gray,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray ;  
Mountains on whose barren breast  
The labouring clouds do often rest ;  
Meadows trim with daisies pied, 75  
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide ;  
Towers and battlements it sees  
Bosomed high in tufted trees,  
Where perhaps some beauty lies,  
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes. 80  
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes  
From betwixt two aged oaks,  
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met  
Are at their savoury dinner set

Of herbs and other country messes, 85  
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses ;  
And then in haste her bower she leaves,  
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves,  
Or, if the earlier season lead,  
To the tanned haycock in the mead. 90  
Sometimes with secure delight  
The upland hamlets will invite,  
When the merry bells ring round,  
And the jocund rebecks sound  
To many a youth and many a maid 95  
Dancing in the chequered shade,  
And young and old come forth to play  
On a sunshine holiday,  
Till the livelong daylight fail :  
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100  
With stories told of many a feat,  
How fairy Mab <sup>1</sup> the junkets eat :  
She was pinched and pulled, she said,  
And he, by Friar's lantern <sup>1</sup> led,  
Tells how the drudging goblin <sup>1</sup> sweat 105  
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,  
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,  
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn  
That ten day-labourers could not end ;  
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend, 110  
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,  
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,  
And crop-full out of doors he flings

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<sup>1</sup> 18, and note.

Ere the first cock his matin rings.  
 Thus done the tales, to bed they creep, 115  
 By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.

Towered cities please us then,  
 And the busy hum of men,  
 Where throngs of knights and barons bold  
 In weeds of peace high triumphs hold, 120  
 With store of ladies, whose bright eyes  
 Rain influence, and judge the prize  
 Of wit or arms, while both contend  
 To win her grace whom all commend.  
 There let Hymen <sup>1</sup> oft appear 125  
 In saffron robe, with taper clear,  
 And pomp and feast and revelry,  
 With mask and antique pageantry,  
 Such sights as youthful poets dream  
 On summer eves by haunted stream. 130  
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,  
 If Jonson's learnèd sock be on,  
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,  
 Warble his native wood-notes wild.

And ever, against eating cares, 135  
 Lap me in soft Lydian <sup>2</sup> airs  
 Married to immortal verse,  
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce  
 In notes with many a winding bout  
 Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out 140  
 With wanton heed and giddy cunning,  
 (The melting voice through mazes running,)

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<sup>1</sup> 46.

<sup>2</sup> See Glossary, "Mode."

Untwisting all the chains that tie  
The hidden soul of harmony ;  
That Orpheus' <sup>1</sup> self may heave his head      145  
From golden slumber on a bed  
Of heaped Elysian <sup>2</sup> flowers, and hear  
Such strains as would have won the ear  
Of Pluto to have quite set free  
His half-regained Eurydice.<sup>1</sup>      150  
    These delights if thou canst give,  
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

---

<sup>1</sup> 42.<sup>2</sup> 23.



## IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,  
The brood of Folly without father bred !  
How little you bestead,  
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys !  
Dwell in some idle brain, 5  
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,  
As thick and numberless  
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,  
Or likest hovering dreams,  
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. 10

But hail, thou Goddess sage and holy,  
Hail, divinest Melancholy !  
Whose saintly visage is too bright  
To hit the sense of human sight,  
And therefore to our weaker view 15  
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue ;  
Black, but such as in esteem  
Prince Memnon's sister<sup>1</sup> might beseem,  
Or that starred Ethiop queen<sup>2</sup> that strove  
To set her beauty's praise above 20  
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.  
Yet thou art higher far descended :  
Thee bright-haired Vesta<sup>3</sup> long of yore

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<sup>1</sup> 65, note.

<sup>2</sup> 12, "Cassiopeia."

<sup>3</sup> 30, 3.

To solitary Saturn bore ;  
 His daughter she — in Saturn's reign 25  
 Such mixture was not held a stain.  
 Oft in glimmering bowers and glades  
 He met her, and in secret shades  
 Of woody Ida's<sup>1</sup> inmost grove,  
 While yet there was no fear of Jove. 30  
 Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,  
 Sober, steadfast, and demure,  
 All in a robe of darkest grain,  
 Flowing with majestic train,  
 And sable stole of cypress lawn 35  
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn :  
 Come, but keep thy wonted state,  
 With even step and musing gait,  
 And looks commercing with the skies,  
 Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes : 40  
 There, held in holy passion still,  
 Forget thyself to marble, till  
 With a sad leaden downward cast  
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast.  
 And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet, 45  
 Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,  
 And hears the Muses<sup>2</sup> in a ring  
 Aye round about Jove's altar<sup>3</sup> sing :  
 And add to these retirèd Leisure,  
 That in trim gardens takes his pleasure ; 50  
 But, first and chiefest, with thee bring  
 Him that yon soars on golden wing,

<sup>1</sup> 34.<sup>2</sup> 36.<sup>3</sup> 34.



“Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure, . . .  
All in a robe of darkest grain,  
Flowing with majestic train.”

*Il Penseroso, 31 +.*



Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,\*  
 The Cherub<sup>1</sup> Contemplation ;  
 And the mute Silence hist along, 55  
 'Less Philomel will deign a song  
 In her sweetest, saddest plight,  
 Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,  
 While Cynthia<sup>2</sup> checks her dragon yoke  
 Gently o'er the accustomed oak. 60

Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,  
 Most musical, most melancholy !  
 Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among  
 I woo, to hear thy even-song ;  
 And, missing thee, I walk unseen 65  
 On the dry smooth-shaven green,  
 To behold the wandering moon,  
 Riding near her highest noon,  
 Like one that had been led astray  
 Through the heaven's wide pathless way, 70  
 And oft, as if her head she bowed,  
 Stooping through a fleecy cloud.

Oft on a plat of rising ground,  
 I hear the far-off curfew sound,  
 Over some wide-watered shore 75  
 Swinging slow with sullen roar ;  
 Or if the air will not permit,  
 Some still removèd place will fit,  
 Where glowing embers through the room  
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom ; 80  
 Far from all resort of mirth,

<sup>1</sup> 72.<sup>2</sup> 37, 43.\* *P. L.* VI. 749+.



Save the cricket on the hearth,  
 Or the bellman's drowsy charm  
 To bless the doors from nightly harm.

Or let my lamp at midnight hour 85  
 Be seen in some high lonely tower,  
 Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,<sup>1</sup>  
 With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere  
 The spirit of Plato, to unfold  
 What worlds or what vast regions hold 90  
 The immortal mind that hath forsook  
 Her mansion in this fleshly nook ;  
 And of those demons that are found  
 In fire, air, flood, or under ground,  
 Whose power hath a true consent 95  
 With planet<sup>2</sup> or with element.  
 Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy  
 In sceptred pall come sweeping by,  
 Presenting Thebes or Pelops' line,<sup>3</sup>  
 Or the tale of Troy<sup>3</sup> divine, 100  
 Or what — though rare — of later age  
 Ennobled hath the buskined stage.

But, O sad virgin, that thy power  
 Might raise Musæus from his bower,  
 Or bid the soul of Orpheus<sup>4</sup> sing 105  
 Such notes as, warbled to the string,  
 Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,  
 And made Hell grant what love did seek !  
 Or call up him that left half-told  
 The story of Cambuscan<sup>5</sup> bold, 110

<sup>1</sup> 12, "Cynosure."

<sup>2</sup> 16.

<sup>3</sup> 66.

<sup>4</sup> 42.

<sup>5</sup> See Glossary.

Of Camball and of Algarsife,  
 And who had Canace to wife,  
 That owned the virtuous ring and glass,  
 And of the wondrous horse of brass  
 On which the Tartar king did ride ; 115  
 And if aught else great bards beside  
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,  
 Of turneys and of trophies hung,  
 Of forests and enchantments drear,  
 Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120

Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,  
 Till civil-suited Morn appear,  
 Not tricked and frownc'd as she was wont  
 With the Attic boy<sup>1</sup> to hunt,  
 But kerchiefed in a comely cloud, 125  
 While rocking winds are piping loud,  
 Or ushered with a shower still,  
 When the gust hath blown his fill,  
 Ending on the rustling leaves  
 With minute-drops from off the eaves. 130  
 And when the sun begins to fling  
 His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring  
 To archèd walks of twilight groves,  
 And shadows brown that Sylvan<sup>2</sup> loves  
 Of pine or monumental oak, 135  
 Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke  
 Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,  
 Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.  
 There in close covert by some brook,

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<sup>1</sup> See Glossary, "Attica."

<sup>2</sup> 51.

Where no profaner eye may look, 140  
 Hide me from day's garish eye,  
 While the bee with honeyed thigh,  
 That at her flowery work doth sing,  
 And the waters murmuring,  
 With such consort as they keep, 145  
 Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep;  
 And let some strange mysterious dream  
 Wave at his wings, in airy stream  
 Of lively portraiture displayed,  
 Softly on my eyelids laid. 150  
 And, as I wake, sweet music breathe  
 Above, about, or underneath,  
 Sent by some spirit to mortals good,  
 Or the unseen Genius<sup>1</sup> of the wood.\*  
 But let my due feet never fail 155  
 To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
 And love the high embowèd roof,  
 With antique pillars massy-proof,  
 And storied windows richly dight,  
 Casting a dim religious light. 160  
 There let the pealing organ blow  
 To the full-voiced quire below,  
 In service high and anthems clear,  
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
 Dissolve me into ecstasies, 165  
 And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.  
 And may at last my weary age  
 Find out the peaceful hermitage,

<sup>1</sup> 51.\* *Lycidas*, 183.

The hairy gown and mossy cell,  
Where I may sit and rightly spell 170  
Of every star that heaven doth show,  
And every herb that sips the dew,  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like prophetic strain.

These pleasures, Melancholy, give, 175  
And I with thee will choose to live.

## INTRODUCTION TO COMUS.

### *General Characteristics.*

IN *Comus* the student will find an opportunity to familiarize himself with poetic types of the highest importance. Because of its external form, it must be classed as a drama; in its spirit, its literary dress, its obvious purpose, and its history, it belongs to the sub-class "masque"; in its interpolated songs it presents exquisite examples of the pure lyric; in its inner purpose and motive it is an allegorical "criticism of life"; and until it has been studied from each of these points of view, it will not have yielded all its possibilities of literary training or of æsthetic pleasure to the reader.

The masque is a product of the Renaissance movement in Italy during the latter part of the Middle Ages, a movement marked by a tendency to excess in every activity of life. It led to extravagance in dress, exaggeration in language, and affectation in manners. The passion for dramatic representation was native to the Italians, but to a people feeling the stimulus of Renaissance activities, ordinary dramatic productions proved too tame to satisfy their craving for novelty and brilliancy, and the masque-type was developed to satisfy what now seems an unnatural and false taste. The distinctive features of the new type were that it enriched the normal dramatic forms by the addition of elements which would call for lavish expenditure, and provide an opportunity for gorgeous and striking display, viz. (1) scenic effects, (2) musical numbers, (3) dancing, and (4) representations of the supernatural. As the Renaissance was marked by a widespread study of the Greek and Latin



classics, it was inevitable that their stories of gods, demigods, monsters, and prodigies should be drafted into the service of the masque-maker, to aid him in securing spectacular effects.

The masque made its appearance in England during the reign of Elizabeth. That period saw the Renaissance movement, with its plenitude of life, at its culmination. Literature, science, art, religion, all suddenly gave evidence of a new and surprising vigor. With the increase of wealth, English social life was in a few decades entirely transformed. Education, before scanty and imperfect, became the possession of the many. The regular drama was still crude in form and not yet wholly in good repute as a means of public entertainment, but in the masque the rich found a ready means for displaying the new wealth, the new taste, the new learning, the new culture, derived from the Continent, of which the masque was itself an example. Since masques must treat of themes acceptable according to the standards of culture and of taste prevailing among the upper classes, their subjects would be abstract, symbolic, poetic in character; their language would be richly adorned with the fruits of the new culture; their music and dancing would afford to the titled and aristocratic amateur actors an opportunity for the display of personal gifts and graces; and their expensiveness rendered them the exclusive luxury of the wealthy few. At first they were presented at the annual revels of societies of learned men (*e.g.* the lawyers of Gray's Inn and the Inner Temple, or the masters and pupils of Cambridge University), where the expense could be shared among a large number of persons; \* but later, numerous masques were produced at the court and at the residences of wealthy nobles, who vied with one another

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\* The masque — *The Triumph of Peace* — presented by the four Inns of Court in 1634 cost over £21,000 in the money of that time.

in the endeavor to provide splendid entertainments for a royal progress, or other occasion of great note. So costly did these productions become that the expense threatened to become prohibitive, and their extravagance would undoubtedly have brought about their early discontinuance had not the Puritan revolution swept them away with all other dramatic performances in 1649.

It seems a strange caprice of fortune that to John Milton, the "Lady of Christ College," Puritan censor of a worldly court, chastened in taste and earnest in spirit, should have come the call to produce the last notable specimen of this brilliant fruit of Culture wedded to Folly; but it was not in caprice, but in pursuance of the end to which his whole life was dedicated, that he converted the masque to the service of the highest good, as a vehicle of sublime truths. Fanciful allegory subordinated to the service of religion; gorgeous stage pictures where distressed mortals find succor from uncouth monsters through the agency of radiant spirits from Heaven, where primeval forest and magic palaces form the rostrum for eloquent championship of the truths of morality and religion; diction in which rich imagery is made the servant of noble thought, and Fancy, not riotous but restrained, gilds the whole with colors not of earth — these are the fruits of the Puritan spirit tempered by Renaissance culture, when enlisted in the service of the Elizabethan masque.

The conventions by which Milton was bound to shape his work were few. It was, however, understood that a masque should consist of two distinct elements, giving to the production, by their opposition, artistic variety and contrast. These were called the "Masque" and the "Anti-masque." The masque should contain the development of an elevated theme, set forth in stately and highly ornate language; the Anti-masque should consist of bizarre and grotesque features

serving as a foil to the serious parts. These grotesque elements Milton introduced so ingeniously that they seem essential to the development of the principal theme. The only other indispensable requirement was that he should introduce various dances (for two of which he utilized the Anti-masque) and lyrics, a task wholly congenial to him.

### *History and Structure.*

*Comus* owes its origin to the desire of John, Earl of Bridgewater and lately appointed Lord President of Wales and of the Marches, to celebrate his assumption of the duties of his office by giving a grand entertainment at his official residence, the castle of Ludlow. He applied to Henry Lawes, a leading musician of the times, who had had an active part in the production of several masques in London, to arrange for a similar performance at Ludlow. Lawes chose Milton to prepare the "libretto" of the work; Inigo Jones, an architect and mechanic of national repute, was engaged to create the scenery and mechanical devices for the stage effects; and Lawes himself undertook to compose the incidental music and direct the stage production.

It is not difficult to reconstruct in imagination the brilliant scene when the masque was presented on Michaelmas night, September 29, 1634. In the great hall of the castle (it was sixty feet long by thirty feet wide) is a stage fitted with scenery for representing a wild wood and a gorgeous dissolving palace, with mechanism for raising and lowering the Spirit by invisible wires, with facilities for producing a sudden blaze of light or the deepest gloom. At one side are the chairs of state, where sit the givers of the feast, the "noble Peer of mickle trust and power" and his Lady, so placed that, without their moving, a little dexterous manipulation of the scenery may bring them for the final scene within the circle of actors instead of spectators. The body of the hall

is filled with honored guests, crown officers, knights of the shire, and burgesses, whose favor, if won by these courtesies, will much lighten the Earl's task of government.

The candles in the sconces are extinguished, the curtains part and disclose a dim wood, silent and threatening in its suggestion of loneliness and unknown terrors. Then soft music is heard, and down amid the "nodding horror" of those shady boughs floats a Spirit whose filmy garments, "spun out of Iris woof," "cast a gleam over the tufted grove." He advances singing (for this is Henry Lawes): —

" From the Heavens now I fly,  
And those happy climes that lie  
Where day never shuts his eye, — " \*

and ends by reciting the explanatory matter in regard to the other characters in the play contained in lines 1 to 92.

In sharp contrast with this scene comes the first phase of the Anti-masque in the wild rout of Comus and his revellers, their grotesque masked faces gleaming in the lurid light of the flickering torches, their dishevelled and tawdry garments contrasting with the delicate, iridescent robes worn by the Spirit, who has hidden in the shrubbery. A blasphemous invocation, a mad orgic dance, a sudden alarm, a wild stampede, and silence and darkness again hold sway as the heroine appears in the person of Lady Alice Egerton, the fourteen-year-old daughter of the Earl, a pupil of Lawes, under whose instruction she has learned to sing the lyrics that fall to her part. Her voice, we are sure, can have floated hardly more sweetly "upon the wings of Silence" in the Song to Echo

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\* Lawes, as stage manager, concluded that the masque would be more effective if it opened with a musical number. He therefore transferred the passage contained in lines 976 to 1011 from the end to the beginning of the play.

than in the musical periods of Milton's matchless apostrophe to Faith, Hope, and Chastity. More fitting, perhaps, are these words from her lips than is the eulogium on chastity, soon heard from the lips of her brother, Sir Thomas Egerton (who is but thirteen years old, and not likely to be deeply versed in "divine Philosophy").

And so the play moves on with its quickly shifting scenes, its rich dialogue, its lovely music, until the Spirit has dispersed the rustics, who present the second phase of the Antimasque with "duck and nod," and has presented the children to their parents amid the plaudits of the spectators.

### *Metrical Form.*

The metrical forms in *Comus* are varied with great effectiveness. The descriptive and narrative parts are in blank verse, the standard form for dramatic poetry. One short passage in dialogue is composed of single lines spoken by alternate speakers, producing something of the effect of heroic couplets. Extended portions, designed to be accompanied by music or dancing, are written in the lilting iambic tetrameter of *L'Allegro*. The set lyrics are in stanzaic forms of singular beauty, devised by Milton or borrowed from the Italian.

The version prepared for the original performance differed in several respects from that afterward published. Originally, after delivering line 671, Comus continued with the thirty lines of argument from 706 to 737, omitted the lines from 737 to 755, and then closed with lines 672 to 790. The Lady then recited all her lines from 690-799. The present division of these two speeches (of seventy-four and fifty-eight lines respectively) into four constitutes a distinct increase in effectiveness. The lines from 779-806 were probably omitted in the acting version. Those from 866 to 889 were set to music and sung alternately by Thyrsis and the two Brothers.



*Criticism.*

*Comus* is essentially a poem rather than a drama. As an acting play, it is deficient in events. Alternate speeches of dreary length usurp the place of spirited dialogue. Information which an artist in dramatic composition would convey through events, or distribute in small portions through the dialogue, are massed and presented in a set speech, not addressed to some person on the stage, but delivered point-blank at the audience. Thus the illusion of reality is wholly lacking; but this is not a peculiarity of the *Comus*. It is characteristic of the masque-type, since masques were always composed for audiences of the highest degree of culture and of leisure, who sought in the spectacle not the excitement and the human interest which the term "dramatic" properly connotes, but rather that agreeable exhilaration which comes from the satisfaction of the senses of sight and hearing, and of the æsthetic sensibilities in general.

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*THE PERSONS IN COMUS.*

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterward in the habit of THYRSIS.

COMUS with his crew.

The LADY.

FIRST BROTHER.

SECOND BROTHER.

SABRINA, the Nymph.

The Chief Persons which presented were: —

THE LORD BRACKLEY.

MR. THOMAS EGERTON, his Brother.

THE LADY ALICE EGERTON.



THE EDUCATION OF COMUS.

## COMUS.

A MASQUE.

PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, BEFORE JOHN, EARL OF  
BRIDGEWATER, THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

*The First Scene Discovers a Wild Wood.*

*The ATTENDANT SPIRIT descends or enters.*

*Spirit.* Before the starry threshold of Jove's court  
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes  
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered  
In regions mild of calm and serene air,  
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot  
Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care,

5

Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,  
 Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,  
 Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,  
 After this mortal change, to her true servants 10  
 Amongst the enthronèd gods on sainted seats.  
 Yet some there be that by true steps aspire  
 To lay their just hands on that golden key  
 That opes the palace of eternity.

To such my errand is ; and but for such 15  
 I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds  
 With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune,<sup>1</sup> besides the sway  
 Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,  
 Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove<sup>1</sup> 20  
 Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles  
 That, like to rich and various gems, inlay  
 The unadornèd bosom of the deep ;  
 Which he, to grace his tributary gods,  
 By course commits to several government,<sup>2</sup> 25  
 And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,  
 And wield their little tridents. But this isle,  
 The greatest and the best of all the main,  
 He quarters to his blue-haired deities ;  
 And all this tract that fronts the falling sun 30  
 A noble peer of mickle trust and power  
 Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide  
 An old and haughty nation, proud in arms :  
 Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,  
 Are coming to attend their father's state 35

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<sup>1</sup> 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup> 49.





“Circe, the daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup  
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,  
And downward fell into a grovelling swine.”

*Comus, 50+.*



And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way  
 Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,  
 The nodding horror of whose shady brows  
 Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger ;  
 And here their tender age might suffer peril, 40  
 But that by quick command from sovran Jove  
 I was dispatched for their defence and guard ;  
 And listen why, for I will tell you now  
 What never yet was heard in tale or song,  
 From old or modern bard in hall or bower. 45

Bacchus,<sup>1</sup> that first from out the purple grape  
 Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine,  
 After the Tuscan mariners transformed,<sup>1</sup>  
 Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,  
 On Circe's island fell. — Who knows not Circe,<sup>2</sup> 50  
 The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup  
 Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,  
 And downward fell into a grovelling swine? —  
 This nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,  
 With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth, 55  
 Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son  
 Much like his father, but his mother more,  
 Whom therefore she brought up and Comus named ;  
 Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,  
 Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, 60  
 At last betakes him to this ominous wood,  
 And in thick shelter of black shades embowered  
 Excels his mother at her mighty art,  
 Offering to every weary traveller

<sup>1</sup> 53.<sup>2</sup> 68.

His orient liquor in a crystal glass, 65  
To quench the drouth of Phœbus ;<sup>1</sup> which as they taste —  
For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst —  
Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,  
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed  
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear, 70  
Or ounce or tiger, hog or bearded goat,  
All other parts remaining as they were ;  
And they, so perfect is their misery,  
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,  
But boast themselves more comely than before, 75  
And all their friends and native home forget,  
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.  
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove  
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,  
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star 80  
I shoot from heaven to give him safe convoy,  
As now I do. But first I must put off  
These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' <sup>2</sup> woof,  
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain  
That to the service of this house belongs, 85  
Who with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song  
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar  
And hush the waving woods ; nor of less faith,  
And in this office of his mountain watch  
Likeliest and nearest to the present aid 90  
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread  
Of hateful steps ; I must be viewless now.

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<sup>1</sup> 37, 38.<sup>2</sup> 53.

COMUS *enters with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening; they come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

*Comus.* The star that bids the shepherd fold  
 Now the top of heaven doth hold ;  
 And the gilded car of day 95  
 His glowing axle <sup>1</sup> doth allay  
 In the steep Atlantic stream ;  
 And the slope sun his upward beam  
 Shoots against the dusky pole,  
 Pacing toward the other goal 100  
 Of his chamber in the east.  
 Meanwhile welcome joy and feast,  
 Midnight shout and revelry,  
 Tipsy dance and jollity.  
 Braid your locks with rosy twine, 105  
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.  
 Rigour now is gone to bed ;  
 And Advice with scrupulous head,  
 Strict Age, and sour Severity,  
 With their grave saws in slumber lie. 110  
 We that are of purer fire  
 Imitate the starry quire, <sup>2</sup>  
 Who in their nightly watchful spheres  
 Lead in swift round the months and years.  
 The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove, 115

<sup>1</sup> 38.

H

<sup>2</sup> 8, 9, 10, and note.

Now to the moon in wavering morrice move ;  
And on the tawny sands and shelves  
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.  
By dimpled brook and fountain brim  
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim, 120  
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep :  
What hath night to do with sleep ?  
Night hath better sweets to prove ;  
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.  
Come, let us our rites begin ; 125  
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,  
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.  
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,  
Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame  
Of midnight torches burns ! mysterious dame, 130  
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb  
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,  
And makes one blot of all the air !  
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,  
Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat',<sup>1</sup> and befriend 135  
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end  
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,  
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,  
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,<sup>2</sup>  
From her cabined loophole peep, 140  
And to the tell-tale Sun descry  
Our concealed solemnity.  
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground  
In a light fantastic round.

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<sup>1</sup> 18, 19.<sup>2</sup> See p. 57, top.

*The Measure.*

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace 145  
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.  
Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees ;  
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure —  
For so I can distinguish by mine art —  
Benighted in these woods ! Now to my charms, 150  
And to my wily trains ; I shall ere long  
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed  
About my mother Circe.<sup>1</sup> Thus I hurl  
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,  
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion, 155  
And give it false presentments, lest the place  
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,  
And put the damsel to suspicious flight ;  
Which must not be, for that's against my course.  
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends, 160  
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,  
Baited with reasons not unplaussible,  
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,  
And hug him into snares. When once her eye  
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust, 165  
I shall appear some harmless villager  
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.  
But here she comes ; I fairly step aside,  
And hearken if I may her business hear.

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<sup>1</sup> 68.



*The LADY enters.*

*Lady.* This way the noise was, if mine ear be true, 170  
 My best 'guide now ; methought it was the sound  
 Of riot and ill-managed merriment,  
 Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe  
 Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,  
 When, for their teeming flocks and granges full, 175  
 In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,<sup>1</sup>  
 And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath  
 To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence  
 Of such late wassailers ; yet, O, where else  
 Shall I inform my unacquainted feet 180  
 In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?  
 My brothers, when they saw me wearied out  
 With this long way, resolving here to lodge  
 Under the spreading favour of these pines,  
 Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket side 185  
 To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit  
 As the kind hospitable woods provide.  
 They left me then when the gray-hooded Even,  
 Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,  
 Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus'<sup>2</sup> wain. 190  
 But where they are, and why they come not back,  
 Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest  
 They had engaged their wandering steps too far,  
 And envious darkness, ere they could return,  
 Had stole them from me : else, O thievish Night, 195  
 Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,

<sup>1</sup> 51.<sup>2</sup> 38.

In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars  
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps  
With everlasting oil, to give due light  
To the misled and lonely traveller? 200  
This is the place, as well as I may guess,  
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth  
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear,  
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.  
What might this be? A thousand fantasies 205  
Begin to throng into my memory,  
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,  
And airy tongues that syllable men's names  
On sands and shores and desert wilderness.  
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound 210  
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended  
By a strong siding champion, Conscience. —  
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,  
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,  
And thou unblemished form of Chastity ! 215  
I see ye visibly, and now believe  
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill  
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,  
To keep my life and honour unassailed. — 220  
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?  
I did not err ; there does a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,  
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove. 225  
I cannot halloo to my brothers, but  
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest

I'll venture ; for my new-enlivened spirits  
 Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

## SONG.

*Sweet Echo,<sup>1</sup> sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen* 230  
*Within thy airy shell*  
*By slow Meander's margent green,*  
*And in the violet-embroidered vale*  
*Where the love-lorn nightingale*  
*Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well ;* 235  
*Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair*  
*That likest thy Narcissus<sup>1</sup> are ?*  
*O, if thou have*  
*Hid them in some flowery cave,*  
*Tell me but where,* 240  
*Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!*  
*So mayst thou be translated to the skies,*  
*And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies !<sup>2</sup>*

*Enter COMUS.*

*Comus.* Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould  
 Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment? 245  
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,  
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air  
 To testify his hidden residence.  
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings  
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night, 250  
 At every fall smoothing the raven down  
 Of darkness till it smiled ! I have oft heard

<sup>1</sup> 51.<sup>2</sup> 10, note.

My mother Circe<sup>1</sup> with the Sirens<sup>2</sup> three,  
 Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,<sup>5</sup>  
 Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs, 255  
 Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,  
 And lap it in Elysium;<sup>3</sup> Scylla<sup>4</sup> wept,  
 And chid her barking waves into attention,  
 And fell Charybdis<sup>4</sup> murmured soft applause.  
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense, 260  
 And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;  
 But such a sacred and home-felt delight,  
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss,  
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,  
 And she shall be my queen. — Hail, foreign wonder! 265  
 Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,  
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine  
 Dwellest here with Pan<sup>5</sup> or Sylvan,<sup>5</sup> by blest song  
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog  
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood. 270

*Lady.* Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise  
 That is addressed to unattending ears.  
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift  
 How to regain my severed company,  
 Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo 275  
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

*Comus.* What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

*Lady.* Dim darkness and this leavy labyrinth.

*Comus.* Could that divide you from near-ushering  
 guides?

*Lady.* They left me weary on a grassy turf. 280

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<sup>1</sup> 68.

<sup>2</sup> 59.

<sup>3</sup> 23.

<sup>4</sup> 69.

<sup>5</sup> 51.

*Comus.* By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

*Lady.* To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.

*Comus.* And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?

*Lady.* They were but twain, and purposed quick  
return.

*Comus.* Perhaps forestalling night prevented them. 285

*Lady.* How easy my misfortune is to hit !

*Comus.* Imports their loss beside the present need?

*Lady.* No less than if I should my brothers lose.

*Comus.* Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

*Lady.* As smooth as Hebe's<sup>1</sup> their unrazored lips. 290

*Comus.* Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox  
In his loose<sup>\*</sup> traces from the furrow came,  
And the swinked hedger at his supper sat.  
I saw them under a green mantling vine  
That crawls along the side of yon small hill, 295  
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots ;  
Their port was more than human, as they stood.  
I took it for a faery vision  
Of some gay creatures of the element,<sup>2</sup>  
That in the colours of the rainbow live, 300  
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,  
And, as I passed, I worshipped. If those you seek,  
It were a journey like the path to Heaven  
To help you find them.

*Lady.* Gentle villager,  
What readiest way would bring me to that place? 305

*Comus.* Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

*Lady.* To find that out, good shepherd, I suppose,

<sup>1</sup> 33.

<sup>2</sup> 4. See also Glossary, "Plato."



In such a scant allowance of starlight,  
 Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,  
 Without the sure guess of well-practised feet. 310

*Comus.* I know each lane, and every alley green,  
 Dingle or bushy dell of this wild wood,  
 And every bosky bourn from side to side,  
 My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood ;  
 And if your stray attendance be yet lodged 315  
 Or shroud within these limits, I shall know  
 Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark  
 From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,  
 I can conduct you, lady, to a low  
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe 320  
 Till further quest.

*Lady.* Shepherd, I take thy word,  
 And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,  
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds  
 With smoky rafters than in tapestry halls  
 And courts of princes, where it first was named, 325  
 And yet is most pretended. In a place  
 Less warranted than this, or less secure,  
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it. —  
 Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial  
 To my proportioned strength ! — Shepherd, lead on. 330

*Enter the two BROTHERS.*

*First Brother.* Unmuffle, ye faint stars, and thou, fair  
 moon,  
 That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,  
 Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,

And disinherit Chaos,<sup>1</sup> that reigns here  
 In double night of darkness and of shades ; 335  
 Or if your influence be quite dammed up  
 With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,  
 Though a rush candle from the wicker hole  
 Of some clay habitation, visit us  
 With thy long levelled rule of streaming light, 340  
 And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or Tyrian Cynosure.<sup>2</sup>

*Second Brother.* Or if our eyes  
 Be barred that happiness, might we but hear  
 The folded flocks penned in their wattled cotes,  
 Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops, 345  
 Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock  
 Count the night watches to his feathery dames,  
 'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,  
 In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.  
 But O that hapless virgin, our lost sister ! 350  
 Where may she wander now, whither betake her  
 From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?  
 Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,  
 Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm  
 Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears. 355  
 What if in wild amazement and affright,  
 Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp  
 Of savage hunger or of savage heat?

*First Brother.* Peace, brother, be not over-exquisite  
 To cast the fashion of uncertain evils ; 360  
 For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,

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<sup>1</sup> 27.

<sup>2</sup> 12, "Cynosure."

What need a man forestall his date of grief,  
 And run to meet what he would most avoid?  
 Or if they be but false alarms of fear,  
 How bitter is such self-delusion ! 365  
 I do not think my sister so to seek,  
 Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,  
 And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,  
 As that the single want of light and noise —  
 Not being in danger, as I trust she is not — 370  
 Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,  
 And put them into misbecoming plight.  
 Virtue could see to do what Virtue would  
 By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
 Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self 375  
 Oft seeks to sweet retirèd solitude,  
 Where, with her best nurse Contemplation,  
 She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,  
 That in the various bustle of resort  
 Were all to-ruffled and sometimes impaired. 380  
 He that has light within his own clear breast  
 May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day :  
 But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts  
 Benighted walks under the mid-day sun ;  
 Himself is his own dungeon.

*Second Brother.* 'Tis most true 385  
 That musing Meditation most affects  
 The pensive secrecy of desert cell,  
 Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,  
 And sits as safe as in a senate-house ;  
 For who would rob a hermit of his weeds, 390  
 His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,

Or do his gray hairs any violence ?  
 But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree<sup>1</sup>  
 Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard  
 Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye, 395  
 To save her blossoms and defend her fruit  
 From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.  
 You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps  
 Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,  
 And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope 400  
 Danger will wink on opportunity,  
 And let a single helpless maiden pass  
 Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.  
 Of night or loneliness it recks me not ;  
 I fear the dread events that dog them both, 405  
 Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person  
 Of our unowned sister.

*First Brother.*                      I do not, brother,  
 Infer as if I thought my sister's state  
 Secure without all doubt or controversy ;  
 Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear 410  
 Does arbitrate the event, my nature is  
 That I incline to hope rather than fear,  
 And gladly banish squint suspicion.  
 My sister is not so defenceless left  
 As you imagine ; she has a hidden strength 415  
 Which you remember not.

*Second Brother.*                      What hidden strength,  
 Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that ?

*First Brother.* I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength

Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.  
 'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity : 420  
 She that has that is clad in complete steel,  
 And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,  
 May trace huge forests and unharboured heaths,  
 Infamous hills and sandy perilous wilds,  
 Where, through the sacred rays of chastity, 425  
 No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer  
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity.  
 Yea, there where very desolation dwells,  
 By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,  
 She may pass on with unblenched majesty, 430  
 Be it not done in pride or in presumption.  
 Some say no evil thing that walks by night,  
 In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,  
 Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost <sup>1</sup>  
 That breaks his magic chains at curfew time, 435  
 No goblin or swart fairy of the mine,  
 Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.  
 Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call  
 Antiquity from the old schools of Greece  
 To testify the arms of chastity? 440  
 Hence had the huntress Dian <sup>2</sup> her dread bow,  
 Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,  
 Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness  
 And spotted mountain pard, but set at nought  
 The frivolous bolt of Cupid ; <sup>3</sup> gods and men 445  
 Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.  
 What was that snaky-headed Gorgon <sup>4</sup> shield

<sup>1</sup> 19.<sup>2</sup> 43.<sup>3</sup> 48.<sup>4</sup> 52.



That wise Minerva<sup>1</sup> wore, unconquered virgin,  
 Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,  
 But rigid looks of chaste austerity, 450  
 And noble grace that dashed brute violence  
 With sudden adoration and blank awe?  
 So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity  
 That, when a soul is found sincerely so,  
 A thousand liveried angels lackey her, 455  
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,  
 And in clear dream and solemn vision  
 Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;  
 Till oft converse with heavenly habitants  
 Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape, 460  
 The unpolluted temple of the mind,  
 And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,  
 Till all be made immortal: but when lust,  
 By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,  
 But most by lewd and lavish act of sin, 465  
 Lets in defilement to the inward parts,  
 The soul grows clotted by contagion,  
 Imbodies and imbrutes, till she quite lose  
 The divine property of her first being.  
 Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp 470  
 Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres,  
 Lingered and sitting by a new-made grave,  
 As loth to leave the body that it loved,  
 And linked itself by carnal sensuality  
 To a degenerate and degraded state.<sup>2</sup> 475  
*Second Brother.* How charming is divine philosophy!

Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
 But musical as is Apollo's<sup>1</sup> lute,  
 And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,  
 Where no crude surfeit reigns.

*First Brother.* List, list ! I hear 480

Some far-off halloo break the silent air.

*Second Brother.* Methought so too ; what should it be ?

*First Brother.* For certain,

Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,

Or else some neighbour woodman, or at worst

Some roving robber calling to his fellows. 485

*Second Brother.* Heaven keep my sister ! Again,  
 again, and near !

Best draw, and stand upon our guard.

*First Brother.* I'll halloo :

If he be friendly, he comes well ; if not,

Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us !

*Enter the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, habited like a shepherd.*

That halloo I should know. What are you ? speak. 490

Come not too near ; you fall on iron stakes else.

*Spirit.* What voice is that ? my young lord ? speak  
 again.

*Second Brother.* O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd,  
 sure !

*First Brother.* Thyrsis ! whose artful strains have oft  
 delayed

The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, 495

And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.

How can'st thou here, good swain? Hath any ram  
 Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,  
 Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?  
 How could'st thou find this dark sequestered nook? 500

*Spirit.* O my loved master's heir, and his next  
 joy,

I came not here on such a trivial toy  
 As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth  
 Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth  
 That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought 505  
 To this my errand, and the care it brought.  
 But O, my virgin lady, where is she?  
 How chance she is not in your company?

*First Brother.* To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without  
 blame

Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. 510

*Spirit.* Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

*First Brother.* What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee  
 briefly shew.

*Spirit.* I'll tell ye; 'tis not vain or fabulous,  
 Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance,  
 What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,<sup>1</sup> 515  
 Storied of old in high immortal verse  
 Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles,  
 And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;<sup>2</sup>  
 For such there be, but unbelief is blind.

Within the navel of this hideous wood, 520  
 Immured in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells,  
 Of Bacchus<sup>3</sup> and of Circe<sup>4</sup> born, great Comus,

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<sup>1</sup> 36.

<sup>2</sup> 23.

<sup>3</sup> 53.

<sup>4</sup> 68.

Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries ;  
 And here to every thirsty wanderer  
 By sly enticement gives his baneful cup, 525  
 With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison  
 The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,  
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast  
 Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage  
 Charactered in the face. This I have learnt 530  
 Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts  
 That brow this bottom-glade ; whence night by night  
 He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl  
 Like stabled wolves or tigers at their prey,  
 Doing abhorred rites to Hecate<sup>1</sup> 535  
 In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.  
 Yet have they many baits and guileful spells  
 To inveigle and invite the unwary sense  
 Of them that pass unweeting by the way.  
 This evening late, by then the chewing flocks 540  
 Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb  
 Of knot-grass dew-besprent and were in fold,  
 I sat me down to watch upon a bank  
 With ivy canopied and interwove  
 With flaunting honeysuckle, and began, 545  
 Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,  
 To meditate my rural minstrelsy,  
 Till fancy had her fill ; but ere a close  
 The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,  
 And filled the air with barbarous dissonance ; 550  
 At which I ceased, and listened them a while,

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<sup>1</sup> 18, 19.

Till an unusual stop of sudden silence  
 Gave respite to the drowsy frightened steeds,  
 That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.  
 At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound 555  
 Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,  
 And stole upon the air, that even Silence  
 Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might  
 Deny her nature and be never more,  
 Still to be so displaced. I was all ear, 560  
 And took in strains that might create a soul  
 Under the ribs of Death ; but O, ere long  
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice  
 Of my most honoured lady, your dear sister.  
 Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear ; 565  
 And ' O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,  
 ' How sweet thou singest, how near the deadly snare !'  
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,  
 Through paths and turnings often trod by day,  
 Till guided by mine ear I found the place, 570  
 Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise —  
 For so by certain signs I knew — had met  
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,  
 The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey ;  
 Who gently asked if he had seen such two, 575  
 Supposing him some neighbour villager.  
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed  
 Ye were the two she meant ; with that I sprung  
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here,  
 But further know I not.

*Second Brother.*                      O night and shades, 580  
 How are ye joined with Hell in triple knot,



Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,  
 Alone and helpless ! Is this the confidence  
 You gave me, brother ?

*First Brother.* Yes, and keep it still ;  
 Lean on it safely : not a period 585  
 Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats  
 Of malice or of sorcery, or that power  
 Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm :  
 Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,  
 Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled ; 590  
 Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm  
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory :  
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,  
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last,  
 Gathered like scum and settled to itself, 595  
 It shall be in eternal restless change  
 Self-fed and self-consumèd. If this fail,  
 The pillared firmament is rottenness,  
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's  
 on ?

Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven 600  
 May never this just sword be lifted up ;  
 But for that damned magician, let him be girt  
 With all the grisly legions that troop  
 Under the sooty flag of Acheron,<sup>1</sup>  
 Harpies<sup>2</sup> and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms 605  
 'Twixt Africa and Ind,<sup>3</sup> I'll find him out,  
 And force him to return his purchase back,  
 Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,

<sup>1</sup> 23.<sup>2</sup> 52<sup>3</sup> 56.

Cursed as his life.

*Spirit.*                      Alas ! good venturous youth,  
I love thy courage yet and bold emprise ;                      610  
But here thy sword can do thee little stead :  
Far other arms and other weapons must  
Be those that quell the might of hellish charm.  
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,  
And crumble all thy sinews.

*First Brother.*                      Why, prithee, shepherd, 615  
How durst thou then thyself approach so near  
As to make this relation ?

*Spirit.*                      Care and utmost shifts  
How to secure the lady from surprisal  
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,  
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled                      620  
In every virtuous plant and healing herb  
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.  
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing ;  
Which when I did, he on the tender grass  
Would sit and hearken e'en to ecstasy,                      625  
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,  
And show me simples of a thousand names,  
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.  
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,  
But of divine effect, he culled me out.                      630  
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,  
But in another country, as he said,  
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil :  
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain  
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon ;                      635  
And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly

That Hermes<sup>1</sup> once to wise Ulysses<sup>2</sup> gave.  
 He called it hæmony, and gave it me,  
 And bade me keep it as of sovran use  
 'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp, 640  
 Or ghastly Furies' apparition.  
 I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,  
 Till now that this extremity compelled ;  
 But now I find it true, for by this means  
 I knew the foul enchanter though disguised, 645  
 Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,  
 And yet came off. If you have this about you —  
 As I will give you when we go — you may  
 Boldly assault the necromancer's hall ;  
 Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood 650  
 And brandished blade rush on him, break his glass,  
 And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,  
 But seize his wand. Though he and his cursed crew  
 Fierce signs of battle make and menace high,  
 Or, like the sons of Vulcan,<sup>3</sup> vomit smoke, 655  
 Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

*First Brother.* Thyrsis, lead on apace ; I'll follow  
 thee,  
 And some good angel bear a shield before us !

*The Scene changes to a stately Palace, set out with all  
 manner of deliciousness ; soft music, tables spread with  
 all dainties. COMUS appears with his rabble, and the  
 LADY set in an enchanted chair ; to whom he offers his  
 glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

*Comus.* Nay, lady, sit ; if I but wave this wand,  
 Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster, 660  
 And you a statue, or as Daphne<sup>1</sup> was,  
 Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

*Lady.* Fool, do not boast ;  
 Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind  
 With all thy charms, although this corporal rind  
 Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good. 665

*Comus.* Why are you vexed, lady ? why do you frown ?  
 Here dwell no frowns nor anger ; from these gates  
 Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures  
 That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,  
 When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns 670  
 Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.  
 And first behold this cordial julep here,  
 That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,  
 With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.  
 Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone<sup>2</sup> 675  
 In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena<sup>3</sup>  
 Is of such power to stir up joy as this,  
 To life so friendly or so cool to thirst.  
 Why should you be so cruel to yourself,  
 And to those dainty limbs which Nature lent 680  
 For gentle usage and soft delicacy ?  
 But you invert the covenants of her trust,  
 And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,  
 With that which you received on other terms ;  
 Scorning the unexempt condition 685  
 By which all mortal frailty must subsist,

<sup>1</sup> 40.<sup>2</sup> 65.<sup>3</sup> 64

Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,  
That have been tired all day without repast,  
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,  
This will restore all soon.

*Lady.* 'Twill not, false traitor ! 690  
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty  
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.  
Was this the cottage and the safe abode  
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,  
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me ! 695  
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver !  
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence  
With visored falsehood and base forgery?  
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here  
With liquorish baits fit to ensnare a brute? 700  
Were it a draught for Juno<sup>1</sup> when she banquets,  
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None  
But such as are good men can give good things ;  
And that which is not good is not delicious  
To a well-governed and wise appetite. 705

*Comus.* O foolishness of men ! that lend their ears  
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,  
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,  
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence !  
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth 710  
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,  
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,  
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,  
But all to please and sate the curious taste?

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<sup>1</sup> 30, 33.



And set to work millions of spinning worms, 715  
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk  
To deck her sons ; and that no corner might  
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins  
She hatched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems  
To store her children with. If all the world 720  
Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,  
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,  
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,  
Not half his riches known, and yet despised ;  
And we should serve him as a grudging master, 725  
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,  
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,  
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,  
And strangled with her waste fertility :  
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with  
plumes, 730  
The herds would over-multitude their lords,  
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought dia-  
monds  
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,  
And so bestud with stars, that they below  
Would grow inured to light, and come at last 735  
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.  
List, lady ; be not coy, and be not cozened  
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.  
Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,  
But must be current ; and the good thereof 740  
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,  
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself.  
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose

It withers on the stalk with languished head.  
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown 745  
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,  
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.  
It is for homely features to keep home ;  
They had their name thence ; coarse complexions  
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply 750  
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.  
What need a vermeil-tintured lip for that,  
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn ?  
There was another meaning in these gifts :  
Think what, and be advised ; you are but young yet. 755  
*Lady.* I had not thought to have unlocked my lips  
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler  
Would think to charm my judgment as mine eyes,  
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.  
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments, 760  
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.  
Impostor, do not charge most innocent Nature,  
As if she would her children should be riotous  
With her abundance. She, good cateress,  
Means her provision only to the good, 765  
That live according to her sober laws  
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.  
If every just man that now pines with want  
Had but a moderate and beseeming share  
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury 770  
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,  
Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed  
In unsuperfluous even proportion,  
And she no whit encumbered with her store :

And then the Giver would be better thanked, 775  
 His praise due paid ; for swinish Gluttony  
 Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,  
 But with besotted base ingratitude  
 Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?  
 Or have I said enough? To him that dares 780  
 Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words  
 Against the sun-clad power of chastity,  
 Fain would I something say, yet to what end?  
 Thou hast not ear nor soul to apprehend  
 The sublime notion and high mystery 785  
 That must be uttered to unfold the sage  
 And serious doctrine of Virginity ;  
 And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know  
 More happiness than this thy present lot.  
 Enjoy your dear wit and gay rhetoric, 790  
 That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence ;  
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.  
 Yet should I try, the uncontrollèd worth  
 Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits  
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence 795  
 That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,  
 And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,  
 Till all thy magic structures reared so high  
 Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.  
*Comus.* She fables not. I feel that I do fear 800  
 Her words set off by some superior power :  
 And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew  
 Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove  
 Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus <sup>1</sup>

To some of Saturn's crew.<sup>1</sup> I must dissemble, 805  
 And try her yet more strongly. — Come, no more !  
 This is mere moral babble, and direct  
 Against the canon laws of our foundation.  
 I must not suffer this : yet 'tis but the lees  
 And settlings of a melancholy blood. 810  
 But this will cure all straight ; one sip of this  
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight  
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste. —

*The BROTHERS rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass  
 out of his hand, and break it against the ground ; his  
 rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The  
 ATTENDANT SPIRIT comes in.*

*Spirit.* What ! have you let the false enchanter scape ?  
 O, ye mistook ! ye should have snatched his wand, 815  
 And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed  
 And backward mutters of dissevering power,  
 We cannot free the lady that sits here  
 In stony fetters fixed and motionless.  
 Yet stay, be not disturbed : now I bethink me, 820  
 Some other means I have which may be used,  
 Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,  
 The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.

There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,  
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream : 825  
 Sabrina<sup>2</sup> is her name, a virgin pure ;  
 Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,<sup>2</sup>  
 That had the sceptre from his father Brute.<sup>2</sup>  
 She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit

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<sup>1</sup> 31.

<sup>2</sup> 67.

Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,<sup>1</sup> 830  
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood  
 That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.  
 The water-nymphs that in the bottom played  
 Held up their pearlèd wrists, and took her in,  
 Bearing her straight to aged Nereus'<sup>2</sup> hall ; 835  
 Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,  
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe  
 In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel,  
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense  
 Dropped in ambrosial oils, till she revived, 840  
 And underwent a quick immortal change,  
 Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains  
 Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve  
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,  
 Helping all urchin blasts and ill-luck signs, 845  
 That the shrewd meddling elf<sup>3</sup> delights to make,  
 Which she with precious vialèd liquors heals ;  
 For which the shepherds at their festivals  
 Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,  
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream 850  
 Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.  
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock  
 The clasping charm and thaw the numbing spell,  
 If she be right invoked in warbled song ;  
 - For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift 855  
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,  
 In hard-besetting need. This will I try,  
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.



## SONG.

*Sabrina fair,*  
*Listen where thou art sitting* 860  
*Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,*  
*In twisted braids of lilies knitting*  
*The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;*  
*Listen for dear honour's sake,*  
*Goddess of the silver lake,* 865  
*Listen and save!*

Listen and appear to us  
 In name of great Oceanus ;<sup>1</sup>  
 By the earth-shaking Neptune's<sup>2</sup> mace,  
 And Tethys' grave majestic pace ; 870  
 By hoary Nereus'<sup>3</sup> wrinkled look,  
 And the Carpathian wizard's<sup>3</sup> hook ;  
 By scaly Triton's<sup>4</sup> winding shell,  
 And old soothsaying Glaucus'<sup>3</sup> spell ;  
 By Leucothea's<sup>3</sup> lovely hands 875  
 And her son<sup>3</sup> that rules the strands ;  
 By Thetis'<sup>3</sup> tinsel-slippered feet,  
 And the songs of Sirens<sup>5</sup> sweet ;  
 By dead Parthenope's<sup>3</sup> dear tomb,  
 And fair Ligea's<sup>3</sup> golden comb, 880  
 Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks  
 Sleeking her soft alluring locks ;  
 By all the nymphs that nightly dance  
 Upon thy streams with wily glance,

<sup>1</sup> 28.<sup>2</sup> 30.<sup>3</sup> 50.<sup>4</sup> 49.<sup>5</sup> 59.

Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head 885  
 From thy coral-paven bed,  
 And bridle in thy headlong wave,  
 Till thou our summons answered have.  
 Listen and save !

SABRINA *rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.*

*By the rushy-fringed bank, 890*  
*Where grow the willow and the osier dank,*  
*My sliding chariot stays,*  
*Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen*  
*Of turkis blue, and emerald green,*  
*That in the channel strays ; 895*  
*Whilst from off the waters fleet*  
*Thus I set my printless feet*  
*O'er the cowslip's velvet head,*  
*That bends not as I tread.*  
*Gentle swain, at thy request 900*  
*I am here!*

*Spirit.* Goddess dear,  
 We implore thy powerful hand  
 To undo the charmèd band  
 Of true virgin here distrest, 905  
 Through the force and through the wile  
 Of unblest enchanter vile.

*Sabrina.* Shepherd, 'tis my office best  
 To help ensnarèd chastity.  
 Brightest lady, look on me. 910  
 Thus I sprinkle on thy breast  
 Drops that from my fountain pure

I have kept of precious cure ;  
 Thrice upon thy finger's tip,  
 Thrice upon thy rubied lip : 915  
 Next this marble venomèd seat,  
 Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,  
 I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.  
 Now the spell hath lost his hold ;  
 And I must haste ere morning hour 920  
 To wait in Amphitrite's <sup>1</sup> bower.

*SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat.*

*Spirit.* Virgin, daughter of Loocrine,<sup>2</sup>  
 Sprung of old Anchises' line,<sup>2</sup>  
 May thy brimmèd waves for this  
 Their full tribute never miss 925  
 From a thousand petty rills  
 That tumble down the snowy hills ;  
 Summer drouth or singed air  
 Never scorch thy tresses fair,  
 Nor wet October's torrent flood 930  
 Thy molten crystal fill with mud ;  
 May thy billows roll ashore  
 The beryl and the golden ore ;  
 May thy lofty head be crowned  
 With many a tower and terrace round, 935  
 And here and there thy banks upon  
 With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Come, lady, while Heaven lends us grace,  
 Let us fly this cursèd place,

Lest the sorcerer us entice 940  
 With some other new device.  
 Not a waste or needless sound  
 Till we come to holier ground.  
 I shall be your faithful guide  
 Through this gloomy covert wide ; 945  
 And not many furlongs thence  
 Is your father's residence,  
 Where this night are met in state  
 Many a friend to gratulate  
 His wished presence, and beside 950  
 All the swains that there abide  
 With jigs and rural dance resort.  
 We shall catch them at their sport,  
 And our sudden coming there  
 Will double all their mirth and cheer. 955  
 Come, let us haste ; the stars grow high,  
 But Night sits monarch yet in the mid-sky.

*The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle ; then come in Country Dancers ; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, with the two BROTHERS and the LADY.*

SONG.

SPIRIT. *Back, shepherds, back ! enough your play*  
*Till next sunshine holiday.*  
*Here be, without duck or nod,* 960  
*Other trippings to be trod*  
*Of lighter toes, and such court guise*  
*As Mercury<sup>1</sup> did first devise*



LUDLOW: "The President's Castle."





*With the mincing Dryades<sup>1</sup>  
On the lawns and on the leas.*

965

*This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.*

*Noble lord and lady bright,  
I have brought ye new delight.  
Here behold so goodly grown  
Three fair branches of your own.  
Heaven hath timely tried their youth, 970  
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,  
And sent them here through hard assays  
With a crown of deathless praise,  
To triumph in victorious dance  
O'er sensual folly and intemperance. 975*

*The dances ended, the SPIRIT epiloguizes.*

*Spirit.* To the ocean now I fly,  
And those happy climes that lie  
Where Day never shuts his eye,  
Up in the broad fields of the sky.  
There I suck the liquid air 980  
All amidst the gardens fair  
Of Hesperus<sup>2</sup> and his daughters three  
That sing about the golden tree.  
Along the crispèd shades and bowers  
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring ; 985  
The Graces<sup>3</sup> and the rosy-bosomed Hours<sup>3</sup>  
Thither all their bounties bring.  
There eternal summer dwells,

---

<sup>1</sup> 51.

<sup>2</sup> 61, 62.

<sup>3</sup> 52.

And west winds with musky wing  
 About the cedarn alleys fling 990  
 Nard and cassia's balmy smells.  
 Iris<sup>1</sup> there with humid bow  
 Waters the odorous banks, that blow  
 Flowers of more mingled hue  
 Than her purpled scarf can shew ; 995  
 And drenches with Elysian<sup>2</sup> dew —  
 List, mortals, if your ears be true ! —  
 Beds of hyacinth and roses,  
 Where young Adonis<sup>3</sup> oft reposes,  
 Waxing well of his deep wound 1000  
 In slumber soft, and on the ground  
 Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.<sup>4</sup>  
 But far above in spangled sheen  
 Celestial Cupid,<sup>5</sup> her famed son, advanced  
 Holds his dear Psyche,<sup>5</sup> sweet entranced 1005  
 After her wandering labours long,  
 Till free consent the gods among  
 Make her his eternal bride,  
 And from her fair unspotted side  
 Two blissful twins are to be born, 1010  
 Youth and Joy ; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done,  
 I can fly, or I can run  
 Quickly to the green earth's end,  
 Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend, 1015  
 And from thence can soar as soon

<sup>1</sup> 53.<sup>2</sup> 23.<sup>3</sup> 47.<sup>4</sup> 46.<sup>5</sup> 48.

To the corners of the moon.

Mortals, that would follow me,

Love Virtue ; she alone is free.

She can teach ye how to climb

1020

Higher than the sphery chime ;<sup>1</sup>

Or, if Virtue feeble were,

Heaven itself would stoop to her.

---

<sup>1</sup> 10.

## INTRODUCTION TO LYCIDAS.

### *General Characteristics.*

*Lycidas* is the last fruit of Milton's period of self-culture at Horton, while as yet life had not chastened or perfected his poetic powers. Written reluctantly, as the opening lines indicate, in response to the call of duty and affection, it relies more than any other of his poems upon adherence to traditions and imitation of conventional models. Yet in spite of its rigid formalism, it is energized through and through with the vital power of his poetic genius.

The poem is important to the student because it exemplifies a type of poetry that is at the same time of great antiquity, of comparative rarity, and, when finely executed, of the highest poetical excellence. This type, the *pastoral*, is so alien to the taste and habits of thought of the present day, that it cannot be comprehended and appreciated fully without some effort on the part of the reader to enter sympathetically into the mood of the author, and such preparatory study as will serve to make clear the causes which called it into being. Thereby what at first seemed artificial and strange is made to seem only natural, although quaint, and the charm inherent in the form is able to make itself felt.

Pastoral poetry had its origin in the glamour which rural life, when viewed only in its external aspects, often presents to the city-dweller. When he compares that life with his own, the one seems delightfully simple, the other distressingly complex, the one placid, the other feverish and harassing, the one innocent, the other sophisticated and corrupt. Thus the



Greek colonists in Sicily were struck with the quality of the life among the native population of the island. The placid life of the shepherds, whose long, eventless days were spent in lolling under a tree in sight of their flocks and improvising sprightly or plaintive melodies upon a rudely fashioned rustic pipe, the competency gained without effort through the natural increase of flocks and herds instead of through the strenuous rivalry of commerce, the simple loves and hates of a primitive people, and the beautiful background of field, forest, and stream which harmoniously set off this gentle life, — all these appealed to the keen esthetic sensibilities of the Greek colonists, and finally found expression in the works of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus (300–200 B.C.), the creators of the technical “pastoral.” These writers were the first to treat with conscious art the naive and spontaneously effective features in the rural life about them. They produced numerous short lyrics or dramatic poems on such themes as a rustic contest in musical improvisation, the death of a shepherd, or the complaints of an enamored swain over the indifference and coquetry of his mistress. Poems on themes treated with accessory descriptions of landscapes and objects were called *idylls* (= “little pictures”), and were faithful representations of rustic life. Two hundred years later, when Rome had become imbued with Greek culture, Theocritus found an imitator in Virgil, who reproduced the essential features of his work, but in a new spirit. In his hands pastoralism became merely “a particular mode of poetic expression, whereby any phase or thought whatever might be set forth under the guise of descriptions of country life.” Thus arises a distinction between the form and the substance of a pastoral. The lyrics of Theocritus really treated of Sicilian shepherd life; they were pastoral both in form and in substance. Those of Virgil, employing the same names, and depicting the same scenes, were really concerned with Romans and Roman life; they

were pastoral in form but not in substance. Thus arose the artificial allegorical pastoral, which attained a fresh popularity in Italy during the later Middle Ages; and later, when the great wave of Renaissance culture broke on the shores of England, and the artificiality in Elizabethan social life tended to create the same exaggerated enthusiasm for simplicity which had given rise to the original pastorals, it found a welcome at the hands of Breton, Sidney, Spenser, and finally of Milton.

It follows from the above that in studying the allegorical pastoral type the pupil is acquainting himself with a sort of universal language in which the life of all preceding ages has from time to time found expression, and it is his task, in reading any particular poem, to interpret it in the light of the circumstances under which that poem was written. This language relies upon certain names (*e.g.* Arcadia, Thyrsis), certain references to Myths (*e.g.* Alpheus and Arethusa\*), certain traditional symbols (*e.g.* laurel for poetry, cypress for death), and certain conventional fictions (*e.g.* that that poem is a song sung to the accompaniment of a reed or "oaten" pipe, that all scenes are country scenes, and all tasks country tasks).

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\*The river Alpheus flowed through a portion of the district of Arcadia, in Greece, the traditional home of pastoralism. It then disappeared in a chasm, and was believed to flow beneath the sea and reappear in the Fountain Arethusa, at Syracuse, in Sicily. The myth arose that Alpheus, god of the river, had formerly fallen in love with an Arcadian nymph named Arethusa, and, as she fled at his approach, had pursued her underground from Arcadia to Sicily, where their lives became joined in the above-mentioned fountain. Later, this myth was interpreted as expressing symbolically the manner in which the stream of Greek literary production, deep and strong in the works of the native poets, took on the gentler pastoral quality in the poetry of Theocritus, Bion, and other Sicilian writers. Thus, "Alpheus" may stand for the poetry of Theocritus, as "Minicius" (a stream near Virgil's birthplace) stands for Virgil's pastoral work.

When *Lycidas* is examined in the light of these facts, it is found to be a pastoral of the most formal type. In it Cambridge University becomes a "hill" of learning, the labor of study becomes driving a team afield or battening flocks, college sports become rustic merrymakings, the student becomes the shepherd Lycidas, and his instructor becomes an older shepherd, Damœtas. In it also Nature becomes peopled with nymphs, satyrs, fauns, and genii, and common objects are given a symbolic significance. In it the Christian religion wears the guise of antiquity, so that the Deity whom Milton serves is feigned to be Phœbus, god of poetry, and the power that guides his pen is attributed to the

"Sisters of the sacred well  
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring."

If this method of treatment seems to the student to give to pastoral poetry a highly artificial character, he should remember that this artificiality is more than compensated for by the fact that pastoralism draws for its beauty of thought and of diction from that perennial fount of all beauty, Nature herself.

### *History.*

From its earliest appearance the pastoral type has been a favorite one with poets for the expression of sorrow over the death of a friend. Thus the *Lycidas*, composed in 1639, was a fitting expression of Milton's grief over the death of an associate in the University. This friend, Edward King, son of Sir John King, Secretary for Ireland, was a young man of elevated character and scholarly attainments. In the University he had vied with Milton in the field of poetic composition, and like Milton, had looked forward to service in the Church as a profession. While Milton, with changed purpose, left the University in 1632 and retired to Horton, King, having become a Fellow of Christ College, remained connected with the Uni-

versity for five years more. On August 10, 1637, he sailed from Chester on a vacation tour to visit his former tutor Chappell, now become Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. While still within sight of land, the ship struck on a rock, foundered, and nearly all on board perished, King being seen kneeling in the act of prayer as the ship sank. Two volumes of memorial verse, containing no less than thirty-six tributes in Latin, Greek, and English, were published by his friends at the University, and to one of these Milton contributed the *Lycidas*, signed J. M., and dated November, 1637. In its classic spirit and refinement of taste it is in marked contrast with the other effusions, many of which are tainted with the puerile and affected conceits of the new school of poetry then being developed by Donne and his contemporaries.

Not only was the pastoral form adopted by Milton suitable in an elegy written by a scholar for scholars, but it also lent itself especially well to the carrying out of the purpose which Milton seems never to have lost sight of, — the proclaiming of some high ethical message to the world. In this case the message was twofold; a scathing rebuke and warning to the Church which King would have so worthily served, and a triumphant assertion of the immortality of man's soul and of his achievements, secured through Christ's loving sacrifice. Since Christ has always been represented as the Shepherd of the Church, it was easy to incorporate these matters with the main subject of the poem without departing from pastoral forms of expression.

#### *Form.*

In its metrical form *Lycidas* is unique. The irregularly recurring rhymes, the occasional unrhymed lines, the rare lapses from pentameter into trimeter, the wholly elastic stanza groups by which the swell and subsidence of each wave of emotion is set off from its fellows, form a "tour de force" in poetic technique which is worthy of the most detailed study.

## LYCIDAS.

[*In this Monody the author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.*]

YET once more, O ye laurels,<sup>1</sup> and once more,  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forced fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. 5  
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear  
Compel me to disturb your season due;  
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,  
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.  
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew 10  
Himself to sing and build the lofty rhyme.  
He must not float upon his watery bier  
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
Without the meed of some melodious tear.  
Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well 15  
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;<sup>2</sup>  
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.  
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse;  
So may some gentle Muse

---

<sup>1</sup> 40.

<sup>2</sup> 36.



With lucky words favour my destined urn, 20  
And as he passes turn,  
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud !

For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,  
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill ;  
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared 25  
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,  
We drove a-field, and both together heard  
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,  
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright 30  
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.  
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,  
Tempered to the oaten flute ;  
Rough Satyrs<sup>1</sup> danced, and Fauns<sup>1</sup> with cloven heel  
From the glad sound would not be absent long, 35  
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone and never must return !  
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, 40  
And all their echoes mourn.  
The willows and the hazel copses green  
Shall now no more be seen  
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.  
As killing as the canker to the rose, 45  
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear,  
When first the white-thorn blows,



Faun, Satyr, and Pastoral pipes "of various quills."

*Lycidas*, 34, 188.



Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs,<sup>1</sup> when the remorseless deep 50  
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

For neither were ye playing on the steep  
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,  
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream. 55

Ay me! I fondly dream,  
"Had ye been there" — for what could that have done?

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,<sup>2</sup>  
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,  
Whom universal nature did lament, 60

When by the rout that made the hideous roar  
His gory visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus<sup>3</sup> to the Lesbian<sup>3</sup> shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care  
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade, 65  
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?

Were it not better done, as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?  
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise — 70  
That last infirmity of noble mind —

To scorn delights and live laborious days;  
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury<sup>4</sup> with the abhorred shears, 75  
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"  
Phœbus<sup>5</sup> replied, and touched my trembling ears;

<sup>1</sup> 51.<sup>2</sup> 42.<sup>3</sup> 42.<sup>4</sup> 52, 54.<sup>5</sup> 38.

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
 Nor in the glistering foil  
 Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies, 80  
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes  
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove ;  
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
 Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain Arethuse,<sup>1</sup> and thou honoured flood, 85  
 Smooth-sliding Mincius,<sup>1</sup> crowned with vocal reeds,  
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood.  
 But now my oat proceeds,  
 And listens to the herald of the sea  
 That came in Neptune's<sup>2</sup> plea. 90  
 He asked the waves and asked the felon winds,  
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?  
 And questioned every gust of rugged wings  
 That blows from off each beakèd promontory.  
 They knew not of his story ; 95  
 And sage Hippotades<sup>3</sup> their answer brings,  
 That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed :  
 The air was calm, and on the level brine  
 Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.  
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100  
 Built in the eclipse,<sup>4</sup> and rigged with curses dark,  
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,  
 His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,  
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge 105  
 Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 338.<sup>2</sup> 49.<sup>3</sup> 52.<sup>4</sup> 13.<sup>5</sup> 41.



“ Ah ! who hath reft,” quoth he, “ my dearest pledge ? ”  
Last came, and last did go,  
The pilot of the Galilean lake ;<sup>1</sup>  
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain, 110  
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain.)  
He shook his mitred locks,<sup>1</sup> and stern bespake :  
“ How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,  
Enow of such as for their bellies’ sake  
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold ! 115  
Of other care they little reckoning make  
Than how to scramble at the shearers’ feast,  
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.  
Blind mouths ! that scarce themselves know how to hold  
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least 120  
That to the faithful herdman’s art belongs !  
What recks it them ? What need they ? They are sped ;  
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.  
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, 125  
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread ;  
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.  
But that two-handed engine at the door 130  
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.”

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past  
That shrunk thy streams ; return, Sicilian Muse,  
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast  
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues. 135

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<sup>1</sup> 89, note.

Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use  
 Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,  
 On whose fresh lap the swart star<sup>1</sup> sparely looks,  
 Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,  
 That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers, 140  
 And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.  
 Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,  
 The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,  
 The white pink and the pansy freaked with jet,  
 The glowing violet, 145  
 The musk-rose and the well-attired woodbine,  
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head  
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears :  
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
 And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150  
 To strew the laureate<sup>2</sup> hearse where Lycid lies.  
 For so, to interpose a little ease,  
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,  
 Ay me ! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas  
 Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled : 155  
 Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
 Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world ;  
 Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,  
 Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus<sup>3</sup> old, 160  
 Where the great vision of the guarded mount<sup>3</sup>  
 Looks toward Namancos<sup>3</sup> and Bayona's<sup>3</sup> hold : —  
 Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth,  
 And, O ye dolphins,<sup>4</sup> waft the hapless youth !

<sup>1</sup> 16, "Sirius."<sup>2</sup> 40.<sup>3</sup> 19.<sup>4</sup> 39.

Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more, 165  
 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.  
 So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore 170  
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky :  
 So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,  
 Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves ;  
 Where, other groves and other streams along,  
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175  
 And hears the unexpressive nuptial song  
 In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
 There entertain him all the saints above,  
 In solemn troops and sweet societies,  
 That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180  
 And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.  
 Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more ;  
 Henceforth thou art the Genius <sup>1</sup> of the shore,  
 In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
 To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,  
 While the still Morn went out with sandals gray.  
 He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
 With eager thought warbling his Doric <sup>2</sup> lay ;  
 And now the sun had stretched out all the hills, 190  
 And now was dropt into the western bay.  
 At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue :  
 To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

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<sup>1</sup> 51.

<sup>2</sup> See Glossary, "Doris."

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SONNETS.

### *General Characteristics.*

Milton's Sonnets have a threefold interest for the student. In the first place, they are representatives of what has often been claimed to be the most perfect of all lyric types, a type so exacting in its requirements that only consummate skill can fully exhaust its possibilities of effective expression, and so essentially artistic that in it the highest poetic impulse may find adequate presentation. Secondly, they are of the highest importance in the study of Milton's life and character, nearly all being addressed to persons with whom Milton was intimately associated, or expressing his attitude upon matters of public policy or of conduct which he considered to be very important. In the third place the intrinsic poetic merit of certain ones, which attain the highest possible level of excellence, notably the Sonnets *To Cyriac Skinner* and *On his Blindness*, have given them an importance in classic literature wholly independent of their authorship.

The Sonnet had its origin in Italy about the middle of the fourteenth century, since which date poets have labored incessantly to develop and perfect the type. Perhaps no other lyric type is subject to such stringent rules as is the Sonnet. According to accepted conventions (1) a Sonnet must be the complete expression of a single thought or mood; (2) it must consist of exactly fourteen lines of iambic pentameter; (3) it must consist of two parts, an "octave" and a "sestet," the octave being composed of two twin-rhymed quatrains of the type *a, b, b, a*, and the sestet being composed of two "tercets" rhymed on two more sounds (*c* and *d*) or on three (*c, d,*

and *e*), in any desired order ; \* (4) the thought in each division must sustain a definite relation to the whole, the octave containing a complete exposition of the subject to be treated or the mood to be voiced in the Sonnet, and the sestet containing the result of the poet's reflections upon that subject, or the outcome of indulging that mood.

According to Mr. William Sharp, three distinct types of the Sonnet may be recognized. The pure type is that described above, which was perfected in Italy, and may be called the Petrarchan form. The second is that invented by Shakespeare, and consists of three quatrains and a closing rhymed couplet, — a departure from the normal type so radical that many critics are inclined to deny that the name *Sonnet* may properly be applied to it. The third class may be called the Miltonic type, since it is distinguished by a departure from the original type which Milton first ventured to introduce, namely, the omission of any sharply-marked line of cleavage in thought or form between the octave and the sestet. Although the feature is found in most of Milton's Sonnets, yet they include also examples of both the Petrarchan and the Shakespearean types.

\* An examination of the eighteen Sonnets following will show that seven have their sestets rhymed in the order

*c, d, c, — d, c, d;*

five have twin tercets of the form

*c, d, e;*

in two, the sestets are rhymed in this order,

*c, d, d, — c, d, c;*

in two, the order is,

*c, d, e, — d, c, e;*

in one, the order is,

*c, d, e, — e, e, d;*

and the sestet of the remaining one is of the Shakespearean type, consisting of a quatrain of the form

*c, d, d, c*

(like those in the octave), followed by a rhymed couplet

L

*e, e.*



## SONNETS.

### I.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year !  
My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.  
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth                   5  
That I to manhood am arrived so near ;  
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.  
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure even                   10  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.

### II.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

O NIGHTINGALE, that on yon bloomy spray  
Warblest at eve when all the woods are still,

Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,  
 While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.  
 Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day, 5  
 First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,  
 Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will  
 Have link'd that amorous power to thy soft lay,  
 Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate  
 Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh ; 10  
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late  
 For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.  
 Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,  
 Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

## III.

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY.

CAPTAIN or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,  
 Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,  
 If deed of honour did thee ever please,  
 Guard them, and him within protect from harms.  
 He can requite thee, for he knows the charms 5  
 That call fame on such gentle acts as these,  
 And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,  
 Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.  
 Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower :  
 The great Emathian conqueror bid spare 10  
 The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower  
 Went to the ground ; and the repeated air  
 Of sad Electra's poet had the power  
 To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

## IV.

## TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY.

LADY, that in the prime of earliest youth  
 Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,  
 And with those few art eminently seen  
 That labour up the hill of heavenly truth,  
 The better part with Mary and with Ruth 5  
 Chosen thou hast ; and they that overween,  
 And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,  
 No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.  
 Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends  
 To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light, 10  
 And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure  
 Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends  
 Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,  
 Hast gained thy entrance, virgin wise and pure.

## V.

## TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY.

DAUGHTER to that good Earl, once President  
 Of England's Council and her Treasury,  
 Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee,  
 And left them both, more in himself content,  
 Till the sad breaking of that Parliament 5  
 Broke him, as that dishonest victory  
 At Chæroneæ, fatal to liberty,  
 Killed with report that old man eloquent ;  
 Though later born than to have known the days

Wherein your father flourished, yet by you, 10  
 Madam, methinks I see him living yet :  
 So well your words his noble virtues praise  
 That all both judge you to relate them true  
 And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

## VI.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING  
 CERTAIN TREATISES.

A BOOK was writ of late called *Tetrachordon*,  
 And woven close, both matter, form, and style :  
 The subject new : it walked the town a while,  
 Numbering good intellects ; now seldom pored on.  
 Cries the stall-reader, " Bless us ! what a word on 5  
 A title-page is this ! " and some in file  
 Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile-  
 End Green. Why is it harder, sirs, than *Gordon*,  
*Colkitto*, or *Macdonnel*, or *Galasp* ?  
 Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek, 10  
 That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.  
 Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek,  
 Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,  
 When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward Greek.

## VII.

ON THE SAME.

I DID but prompt the age to quit their clogs  
 By the known rules of ancient liberty,

When straight a barbarous noise environs me  
 Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs ;  
 As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs      5  
 Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,  
 Which after held the sun and moon in fee.  
 But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,  
 That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,  
 And still revolt when truth would set them free.      10  
 License they mean when they cry Liberty ;  
 For who loves that must first be wise and good :  
 But from that mark how far they rove we see,  
 For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

## VIII.

TO MR. H. LAWES, ON HIS AIRS.

HARRY, whose tuneful and well-measured song  
 First taught our English music how to span  
 Words with just note and accent, not to scan  
 With Midas' ears, committing short and long,  
 Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,      5  
 With praise enough for Envy to look wan :  
 To after age thou shalt be writ the man  
 That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.  
 Thou honour'st verse, and verse must lend her wing  
 To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,      10  
 That tun'st their happiest lines in hymn or story.  
 Dante shall give fame leave to set thee higher  
 Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing  
 Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.



## IX.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHERINE THOMSON,  
MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND.

WHEN Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,  
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,  
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load  
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.  
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour, 5  
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod,  
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,  
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.  
Love led them on ; and Faith, who knew them best  
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams 10  
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,  
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes  
Before the Judge, who thenceforth bid thee rest  
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

## X.

TO MR. LAWRENCE.

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son,  
Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire,  
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire  
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won  
From the hard season gaining? Time will run 5  
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire  
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire  
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.

What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,  
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise 10  
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice  
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?  
He who of those delights can judge, and spare  
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

## XI.

TO CYRIAC SKINNER.

CYRIAC, whose grandsire on the royal bench  
Of British Themis, with no mean applause  
Pronounced and in his volumes taught our laws,  
Which others at their bar so often wrench,  
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench 5  
In mirth that after no repenting draws ;  
Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause,  
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.  
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know  
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way ; 10  
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,  
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,  
That with superfluous burden loads the day,  
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

## XII.

TO THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX.

FAIRFAX, whose name in arms through Europe rings,  
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,

And all her jealous monarchs with amaze  
 And rumours loud that daunt remotest kings,  
 Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings 5  
 Victory home, though new rebellions raise  
 Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays  
 Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.  
 O, yet a nobler task awaits thy hand —  
 For what can war but endless war still breed? — 10  
 Till truth and right from violence be freed,  
 And public faith cleared from the shameful brand  
 Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,  
 While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

## XIII.

## TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL.

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud  
 Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
 Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
 To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,  
 And on the back of crownèd Fortune proud 5  
 Hast reared God's trophies and his work pursued,  
 While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,  
 And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,  
 And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains  
 To conquer still; Peace hath her victories 10  
 No less renowned than War: new foes arise,  
 Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains  
 Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
 Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

## XIV.

TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER.

VANE, young in years, but in sage counsel old,  
 Than whom a better senator ne'er held  
 The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled  
 The fierce Epirot and the African bold,  
 Whether to settle peace or to unfold 5  
 The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled ;  
 Then to advise how war may best upheld  
 Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,  
 In all her equipage : besides to know  
 Both spiritual power and civil, what each means, 10  
 What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done.  
 The bounds of either sword to thee we owe :  
 Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans  
 In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

## XV.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent  
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
 And that one talent which is death to hide  
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present 5  
 My true account, lest He returning chide, —  
 “Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”  
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
 That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need  
 Either man’s work or his own gifts. Who best 10

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
 Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,  
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;  
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

## XVI.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;  
 Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
 When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,  
 Forget not : in thy book record their groans 5  
 Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
 Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled  
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
 To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow 10  
 O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
 The triple Tyrant ; that from these may grow  
 A hundredfold, who having learnt thy way  
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

## XVII.

TO CYRIAC SKINNER, ON HIS BLINDNESS.

CYRIAC, this three years' day these eyes, though clear  
 To outward view of blemish or of spot,  
 Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot ;  
 Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear  
 Of sun or moon or star, throughout the year, 5



Or man or woman. Yet I argue not  
 Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot  
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer  
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?  
 The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied 10  
 In Liberty's defence, my noble task,  
 Of which all Europe rings from side to side.  
 This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask  
 Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

## XVIII.

## ON HIS DECEASED WIFE.

METHOUGHT I saw my late espousèd saint  
 Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,  
 Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,  
 Rescued from death by force though pale and faint.  
 Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint 5  
 Purification in the old Law did save,  
 And such as yet once more I trust to have  
 Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,  
 Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.  
 Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight 10  
 Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined  
 So clear as in no face with more delight.  
 But O, as to embrace me she inclined,  
 I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night !

## NOTES ON THE MINOR POEMS.

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These notes and questions aim to call attention to the literary art of the compositions. It is assumed that the pupil will employ the glossary and the introduction in elucidating the *meaning* of the poems, without repeated injunctions to do so.

### HYMN ON THE NATIVITY.

**Introduction.** Note the direct announcement of the subject of the poem. 2. What gain in poetic suggestiveness through the use of this title instead of the phrase Son of God? 8, 9. Are these lines tautological, or do "light" and "blaze" suggest two distinct attributes of deity? 19. Is the mixture of heathen with Christian conceptions in good taste? Note other examples in the poem. What change in the character and meaning of the words "wizards" (23), "prevent" (24), "quire" (27), since the time of Milton? Note how in the Introduction many of the leading conceptions to be developed in the poem are briefly indicated,—the humble circumstances of Christ's birth, his mission of redemption and peace to man, his glory, and his heavenly attendants.

**The Hymn, 29-124.** These lines contain a word-painting of the aspect of Nature at Christ's advent. What materials in the picture does Milton draw from history? What from classic traditions? What from his poetic invention? Note how prosaic facts (*e.g.* that the season was winter, that there were no international wars in progress at the time) are transmuted into poetry through the exercise of the imagination, snow becoming a "veil," kings being conceived as refraining from aggression through an unaccountable "awe" in the presence of a power that they do not comprehend, etc. Note the gain in effectiveness through the use of concrete images ("the heaven-born child all *meanly wrapped*," "the *rude manger*," "the *hookèd* chariot," "unstained with hostile *blood*"). Note the sym-

bolic meaning of "*olive green*," "*turtle wing*," "*myrtle wand*." Why is the selection of Lucifer (74) to warn the stars appropriate? In what sense is Christ called "Pan" (89), and why is the title expressive in this connection? Why is "Nature" limited by Milton to the space "beneath the hollow round of Cynthia's seat"? In these eleven stanzas, does Milton exhibit more powers of original creation or of adaptation of preëxisting materials?

**125-164.** This passage sets forth in prophetic strain the import of the Advent to man. What two emotions does the thought of the Advent, in its immediate (149+) and its remote (135+) aspects, awaken in the poet's mind? Note how the first-mentioned subject of the poem, "the Heaven-born Child," is employed (151) to effect the transition from one to the other emotional state. Note the impressive effect of the abrupt transition from a picture of peace to one of awe and terror, and how it suggests the shock of the first blast of the trumpet of doom. Why is Vanity described (136) as being speckled? What is the symbolism of the "age of gold" (135)? Of the "rainbow" (143)? What is the force of "return" in line 142? Note the onomatopoeic effect of the consonant and vowel sounds in lines 156 and 164. Note the harmony between the extra length of the line and the character of the scene described.

**165-236.** These stanzas rehearse the blessings wrought through Christ's advent, in the shape of the overthrow of evil religions, which thenceforth will be discredited among mankind. What change in man's conception of his relations to the Deity is referred to in stanza XIX? Of what religion is the Old Dragon (168) a symbol? The Delphic oracle (180)? The Lars and Lemures (191)? Peor and Baalim (197)? Isis and Orus (212)? Ghosts and fays (234-235)? Is the order in which they are mentioned a studied one? Compare this order with that employed in the list of gods in *Paradise Lost*, 381+, and note the reason given for that order. Compare the treatment of the deities in the two poems, and state Milton's theory of the origin of the heathen gods. These descriptions are full of expressive epithets, by which the imagination is stimulated. Why, for example, is the noise in the temples of the

oracles hideous (174)? What historical facts does the phrase "words deceiving" (175) recall? Why is Apollo's shriek (178) hollow? Why is the priest (180) pale-eyed? Why does Milton describe the mountains (181) as lonely?

**Conclusion, 236, 244.** Note how much force is gained by the fiction of direct vision. Also note how the effect of unity is given to the entire poem by leading the mind back to the point of departure, — the new-born Christ. But note that now the aspect of the scene is greatly changed by the introduction of different accessories. The stable with its "rude manger" is now perceived to be "courtly." The warmth of mother-love, not the chill of winter, encircles the babe. For the adoration of the earth-born wizards is substituted the homage of a body-guard of "bright-harnessed angels."

#### L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO.

**L'Allegro, 1-10.** Because of which of Venus' attributes does Milton select her (14) to be the parent of Euphrosyne? Contrast the kind of mirth that springs from the union of Venus and Bacchus, with the kind that is born of Zephyr and Aurora. Which genealogy would Milton probably prefer? Lines 25-34 are celebrated for their use of clear-cut consonant sounds to express light, springy movement. In what sense does Milton use the expression "Wanton wiles"? "Wreathèd smiles?" "Wrinkled care?" Why is Liberty called a mountain nymph? With line 41 begins Milton's description of the series of pleasures consonant with the mood of L'Allegro. The failure of the untrained reader to appreciate these charming pictures is largely due to the fact that his mind does not actively coöperate with the poet and visualize in definite images the scenes presented. The pupil should constantly stimulate his own imagination by questions. *E.g.* "Where is L'Allegro when the lark startles the dull night? Who is really startled? Why is the word 'startle' singularly well chosen? With what is the Dawn dappled? Who comes to the window? Why does L'Allegro prefer to be 'not unseen'?" Note the lively enthusiasm expressed by the massing of details in lines 64 to 68. What suggestion is conveyed by the

word "lies" (79)? Whence are the names Corydon, Thyrsis, Phillis, derived, and why are they appropriate in this passage? Should you prefer the use of English names? Are "messes" (85), "sweat" (105), "lubber" (110), "hairy" (112), "crop-full" (113), poetic words? Is their employment here justifiable? What is the symbolism of Hymen's "saffron" robe (126)? Of the sock (132)? Note Milton's discriminating characterization of Jonson's and Shakespeare's work in the phrases "learned sock" and "native wood-notes." Note how the reference to Orpheus' visit to Pluto's realm, by echoing the references in the opening ten lines of the poem, gives the effect of unity to the whole; and note also that this final passage suggests the method by which Milton himself especially loved to banish "loathèd Melancholy."

**Il Penseroso.** Distinguish between the Melancholy in *L'Allegro*, 1-10, and that in *Il Penseroso*, 11-44. Are the "vain deluding joys" (1) those described in *L'Allegro*? What in Saturn's history warrants the use of the epithet "solitary" (24)? Is the epithet expressive *in this connection*? Why should Saturn have feared Jove? Note how the appellation "Nun" suggests the chief difference between the kind of pleasures described in *L'Allegro* and those now to be depicted. What was the original meaning of "fond" (6), "pensioner" (10), "kerchief" (125), "grain" (33), "passion" (41)? Why does Il Penseroso wish to walk unseen (65)? Note the assonances in lines 55, 62, 76. What is the symbolic significance of the oak (60), the pall (98), the buskin (102), iron tears (107)? What attendant of Euphrosyne corresponds to the Cherub Contemplation? What sounds in *L'Allegro* correspond to the song of Philomel (47)? What in *L'Allegro* are the counterparts of the demons in line 93? Of the Tragedy (97)? Contrast the use of the Orpheus myth in the two poems; the treatment of secular and religious music in each; the morning scenes in each. Contrast the attitude of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* towards books. What authors does Milton seem especially to admire? Of which goddess, Euphrosyne or Melancholy, can you make the most detailed mental picture? Which of all the scenes depicted appeals to you most, or calls up most vividly some experience of your own?



## COMUS.

**1-92.** Explanatory matter preparatory to the beginning of dramatic action. Note the order of exposition: *why* the Spirit comes; *to whose aid* he comes; *against what foes* he comes; *how* these aims are to be accomplished. Observe how Milton enters imaginatively into the consciousness of a *spiritual being*, and expresses his emotions when brought into contact with mundane conditions. Note the shrewd appeal to the sympathies of a British audience in 21-23 and 27-29, and the appeal to local feeling in 33. Note the anticipatory reference in the word "transformed" (48). Why does Milton bring Comus (= revelry) to the British Isles (60) from French and Spanish soil? Why does not the change (69) affect the whole person, as in the Greek myth? (Dramatic reason? Symbolic reason?) What is the allegorical signification of lines 74-76. Note the fitness of the *s*-sound for the alliterative lines 80 and 81. To what person in the service of the Earl of Bridgewater would the audience apply the description in lines 85-88? To what mythical personage does Milton in effect liken him?

**93-144.** The first phase of the Anti-masque? Describe the character and the effect of the change in metre. Note the various modifications of metre for onomatopoeic effect (111-118); compare the metrical effects in lines 143, 144, with those in *L'Allegro*, lines 33, 34. What line most fully expresses the moral depravity of Comus? Note that the evil resides not in the acts, but in the spirit in which they are committed.

**145-330.** From what does the "pace" (145) "differ," and how? What is the significance of "spongy" (154), "blear" (155), "quaint" (157), "fairly" (168), "amiss" (177)? What dramatic reasons for the long explanation in 153-195? Note in the beautiful simile of the palmer (188-190) how the picture gains definiteness from the descriptive touches, "*grey-hooded*," "*sad votarist*," the "*wheels of Phœbus' wain*." Is the metaphor in 197-198 dignified? Note the ingenious device by which the Spirit, hiding above, is enabled to confirm the Lady's faith, and the audience is reminded of his presence and his purpose. Why would the tribute to the beauty of the song in

244-264 be pleasing to the audience? Are the sentiments expressed appropriate on the lips of Comus? Would he desire a queen who should arouse in him a "sacred and home-felt delight"? What is the appearance of Comus at the moment when he discloses his presence to the Lady? What is Comus' motive in the speech (291-302)? Is Milton's reflection upon the manners of the Stuart court (322-326) introduced in a suitable place? Why is the prayer in 329-330 artistically suitable at the close of this scene?

**331-480.** Note that Milton has presented in this dialogue the contrasting attitudes toward danger adopted by the optimist and the pessimist. Milton's eloquent tributes to the power of Virtue (373-375, 381-385) and to the effect of holy thoughts in spiritualizing the whole man (456-463) are unsurpassed, and should be committed to memory. The interpretation of the Greek myths of Diana and Minerva is worthy of careful study. Observe also Milton's ingenious explanation of the nature and origin of ghosts. The entire passage from 359 to 480 is essentially undramatic; but it is not out of place in such an entertainment as this at Ludlow.

**481-656.** Describe the physical appearance of the Spirit at this juncture. Is it artistic to introduce here a second description of Comus, and an account of what we have just seen presented on the stage? The skill shown in varying the treatment of the same themes is well worthy of study. Does the Spirit speak in the language and style of a shepherd in the service of the Earl of Bridgewater? Note the three magnificent examples of hyperbole in lines 555-562. In Milton's manuscript the steeds of Sleep in line 553 are called "drowsy-flighted"; in the edition printed for Lawes three years later they are called "drowsy frightened"; which epithet seems to you the more expressive? How do lines 589-592 correspond with the facts in regard to the Lady? (Cf. 590, 663-665.) What implied compliment to the actor in lines 494-496, 623-625? Compare the ending of this scene (658) with that of the previous scene (329-330). What is the allegorical significance of the fact that the Spirit leaves to the brothers the task of rescuing the Lady?

**659-813.** Is the Lady helpless in her chair, or only wisely passive in the presence of superior force? What expression in her first

speech shows that she has not lost faith in God? What in her second shows that she has not lost the freedom of her mind? Note what assertions in Comus' speeches are in themselves true, though misapplied. These speeches, in which the false and the true are craftily commingled, are worthy of study for their ingenuity. They also voice Milton's deliberate opinions on subjects in regard to which the Cavaliers and the Puritans were at odds, and both, in Milton's opinion, equally in error.

814-1023. What moral is symbolically expressed in the results of the brothers' failure to seize the wand? In the means by which Sabrina releases the Lady? Why would the guests present be pleased with this scene, and with the historical reference in lines 824-851? What poetic device is prominent in the Invocation to Sabrina? Note the imaginative beauty of the tribute to Sabrina (922-937), in which are massed all the conditions that might be conceived to render a river blessed. What time in the day is it supposed to be when the Country Dances are disclosed? Describe their dancing. (The second division of the Anti-masque?) What takes place on the stage between lines 965 and 966? Was the Lady herself "victorious over sensual folly and intemperance"? Were her Brothers "victorious"? Distinguish between the "Venus" and "Love" whom Comus mentions in line 124, and the "Assyrian Queen" and her "famed son, Cupid," of lines 1002-1004. Show how the experiences of the Lady justify the moral drawn by the Spirit in lines 1018-1023.

#### LYCIDAS.

1-84. Observe how the opening lines create at once the atmosphere of classic pastoralism which is to pervade the entire poem, and strike the key-note of sadness to which all its harmonies are attuned. On what grounds does Milton assume that the Muses will be "coy" (18)? Why are these expressions of grief called "lucky words" (20)? Note the method of depicting unbroken comradeship in lines 22-30. What college occupations are here metaphorically indicated? Why are the similes in 45-49 appropriate in a pastoral poem, and why is each expressive of some characteristic of Lycidas? Observe how, by imitating the complaints of Theocritus

and Virgil in their elegies (50-55), Milton prepares the way first for his impeachment of the worth of high endeavor, and then for the first of those climaxes of passionate moral exaltation which make the poem great. Note the compression of the thought in this paragraph (70-84) due to this exaltation. Why does he refer to that one of the Fates who cuts the thread of life as a "Fury"?

85-131. The subsidence of the first wave of high emotion is indicated by a fresh appeal to the sources of pastoral inspiration, under whose influence the poet is led to express the concern of those most deeply grieved by the death of Lycidas. These are Neptune, to whom the shipwreck is likely to be falsely attributed, Camus, the patron deity of the University on the Cam, and St. Peter, the head of the Church Universal. The symbolism was not so obscure to the scholars for whom these verses were written as it is likely to be to the modern reader. Thus the "hairy mantle" of Academics (cf. "Budge doctors of the Stoic fur," *Comus*, 707), the bonnet woven of sedge from the bed of the Cam, with its faint markings like those on the petals of the hyacinth, the mitre and the keys of St. Peter, were all symbols intelligible to the readers of Milton's day. In 113-131 we have the second emotional climax, induced by a contemplation of certain evil conditions in the Church which Lycidas, had he not been destroyed by an untoward fate, might have been instrumental in abolishing. At least he would have been a living rebuke to the unworthy servants of the Church, who devoured its revenues and neglected its duties. Every metaphorical expression should be carefully interpreted. What is the fold? the shearer's feast? the sheep-hook? the flashy song? the rank mist? the contagion? the wolf?

132-193. Milton's passionate denunciation of the "corrupted clergy" is pastoral in form and expression, but is too vehement in spirit for a genuine pastoral. As before, when he had been carried away by emotion, he now indicates the subsidence of the wave by an appeal to another pastoral influence. The appeal to the sisters of the Sacred Well had summoned to his aid the *spirit of classicism*; the appeal to Arethusa and Mincius had awakened in him the artificial and formal *mood of Virgil's pastoral work*; and now,



with the appeal to the gentle Sicilian Muse, a tenderer mood succeeds the bitter one, and his affectionate grief seeks its normal expression in an imaginary tribute of flowers to be strown upon the bier of his friend. Note what characteristic feature in each flower renders it appropriate for a funeral garland. As in the previous cases, this mood is of short duration. There ensues a passionate grief at the thought of the indignities to which the *body* of Lycidas may be subjected, and this in turn prepares the way for a reaction into a mood of exultation, over the thought of the immortal life into which his *spirit* has entered. Observe the note of sincerity that vibrates in the music of the poem when Milton, abandoning classic metaphor, gives rein to his own enthusiastic religious convictions. No more exalted expression of faith triumphant over the material fact of death than that in lines 165-181 was ever penned.

But the principle of unity requires that a poem shall end in the same style that it begins. Therefore lines 182-185 encompass us again with the atmosphere of classical pastoralism, in preparation for the concluding octave. In this, observe how the epithet "uncouth" (186) echoes the note in the second line of the Introduction, the epithet "Doric" expresses the standard which the poet has set himself, the epithet "eager" suggests his apology and his excuse for departing from that standard, and the closing line hints at the broader interests which are henceforth to absorb his energies and preclude further lyric productions.

**General Structure and Form.**—In closing his study of the poem, the pupil should note that it is apparently constructed upon a definite scheme of antithetical moods, such as accompany violent grief. Thus the successive thoughts are: (1) "We were happy" — "But O the heavy change!" (2) "The Nymphs failed to watch over him" — "But what could that have done?" (3) "Fate ruthlessly slays the poet" — "But not the praise," etc. He should also ask himself whether there be not a subtle æsthetic reason for Milton's adoption of this peculiar metrical form, with its irregularly rhymed lines, its occasional lapses from pentameter into trimeter, and its scattered lines for which no rhyming counterpart is to be found.



## SONNETS.

I., II. The first two Sonnets were composed while Milton was still at the University. The first is notable because it testifies to the early age at which Milton's standards of conduct, his sense of duty to God, his willingness to "stay the very ripening of the time," became controlling forces in his life. Note in lines 4 and 7 the same sentiment which finds expression six years later in the opening lines of *Lycidas*, and in 10-12 the same purpose which appears twenty-four years later in the Sonnet *To Cyriac Skinner* (No. XVII.). The second Sonnet is a mere playful expression of the natural yearnings of a romantic and poetically-inclined youth, at the season when "a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." It is in no sense original, and its style is marked by the affectations characteristic of the late Elizabethan school of poets.

III., IV., V. This group, composed within a few years after his foreign trip, is of slight interest. Sonnet III. was written when the advance of the royal army in 1642, after the battle of Edgehill, made it seem probable that London would be occupied by the troops. Milton was living in "a garden-house" near the city wall, and would therefore have been exposed to annoyance had the city been besieged. All three are purely personal, although the references to Alexander and Pindar (III., 10-11), to Euripides (III., 13), and to the defeat of the Athenians at Chæronea and the consequent death of Socrates (V., 7-8) show the influence of Milton's classical studies, and the political references in V., 5-8, indicate the bent of his mind toward the championship of freedom.

VI., VII. These Sonnets were the results of his first struggle for liberty in his pamphlets on divorce, published in 1643-1645. The *Tetrachordon* expounded the four chief passages of Scripture dealing with the subject. Both of these Sonnets are conceived in that spirit of rough combativeness which marked the literary and religious tilts of the times. The first essays to use ridicule, a weapon which Milton could never use effectively. His aim was to enlist on the side of his book the prevailing hostility to the Scotch race due to religious differences. The second is serious in tone, but abusive.

VIII., IX., X., XI. This group, like the second, is composed of

Sonnets personal in character, but is the fruit of maturer powers. It represents the work of calm intervals in the strenuous life to which Milton was condemned, between his declaration of moral and intellectual independence in 1643 (see Sonnets VI. and VII.) and his withdrawal from active public service and entrance upon the composition of *Paradise Lost* in 1657. Indeed, the Sonnet *To Cyriac Skinner* (No. XI.) was probably written in 1658, when uncertainty as to "what the Swede intend" led Cromwell himself to bring the matter before Parliament.

XII.-XVII. The twelfth Sonnet is the first of a group in which Milton poured out in impassioned language his feelings on matters related to the Civil War, and on his own relation to public affairs, including his regret that the service of the State had robbed him of the eyesight requisite for the poetic work to which he had always considered himself consecrated. They are probably the more impassioned because his official relation to the government forbade him to adopt any other means of expression. The Sonnets to Fairfax, Cromwell, and Vane are notable because they testify to the clearness with which Milton discerned the principles at stake through the obscuring smoke of the conflict, and the tenacity with which he championed the cause of Liberty against its professed friends as well as its open foes. Sonnet XII. refers to the capture of Colchester in 1648; Sonnet XIII. to the attempt of the Presbyterians to secure the establishment of a Presbyterian State church. Sonnet XVI. was occasioned by the slaughter of the Lutheran inhabitants of three valleys in Piedmont by the soldiery of the Catholic Duke of Savoy, in order to stamp out Protestantism in that region (April, 1655). Sonnet XVII. refers to the effect which Milton believed that his *Defensio Secunda* (*pro populo Anglicano*) must have had toward justifying the Parliament of England in the eyes of Europe for its resistance against Charles I. Written in 1655, it is his final independent utterance on the subject of popular liberty.

XVIII. This Sonnet derives a pathetic interest because it voices Milton's grief over the death of his second wife, whom he truly loved, and whose society he was privileged to enjoy for but a little more than a year.

## GLOSSARY.

**alabaster** or **alabaster**. A mineral (granular sulphate of lime) of a pure white color, easily carved into ornaments when freshly cut, but hardening upon continued exposure to air, until it resembles marble.

**aloof**. 1. (Perhaps from a-luff =) To the windward of. 2. At a safe distance from.

**amain**. (A.S.) With force.

**amarant**. (Gr. = not fading.) A name given by the naturalist Pliny to a real or imaginary flower of purple color which does not fade. The poets are fond of using it to suggest immortal life and heavenly scenes.

**ambrosia**. (Gr. = not mortal.) A classic name for the food of the gods, which exhaled a delicate fragrance. Applied by poets to anything divinely fragrant.

**anarchy**. (Gr. = without leadership.) A state of lawlessness.

**anon**. (A.S. = in one.) 1. Quickly. 2. At other times.

**Apocalypse**. (Gr. = uncover.) The last book in the Bible, otherwise called Revelation, in which is recorded the vision of St. John the Divine, revealing the fate of the earth and its inhabitants. In Chapter xii. is a denunciation of woe to man owing to the advent on earth of the Devil in the form of a dragon.

**argument**. (L.) 1. Evidence. 2. Reasoning. 3. Theme for discourse or writing. 4. Inscription.

**asphodel**. (Gr.) The classic name of the daffodil, a flower that was said to grow abundantly in the Elysian Fields (23).

**Astoreth**. The principal Phœnician deity, identified with the moon as queen of heaven, but with Venus as goddess of the passion of love. The plural form of the name, Ashtaroth, refers to the different manifestations of this goddess in various parts of Palestine. The name appears in modified form among the Persians, Assyrians, and other nations. Cf. *Astarte*, *P. L.* I. 439.

**Attica**. That province of Greece whose capital was Athens.

The "Attic boy" is Cephalus, grandson of the king of Attica, who loved and wedded Aurora, or the Morn. The adjective *Attic*, owing to the preëminence of Athens in literature and art, has come to connote perfection in matters of æsthetic culture.

**Baalim.** (Pl. of Baal.) The name applied to various heathen gods formerly worshipped in Palestine.

**Babel.** Milton uses this name sometimes as an equivalent for the name Babylon, sometimes in its ordinary application as the name of the tower built on the plain of Shinar (or Sennaar) by the descendants of Noah, as described in Genesis xi. 1-10.

**batten.** To cause to grow fat.

**beatific.** (L.) Capable of causing extreme happiness.

**beatitude.** (L.) A state of extreme happiness.

**behoof.** Advantage.

**behave.** (A.S.) To be necessary (impersonal verb).

**Belial.** (Heb. = without usefulness.) The phrase in the Bible "man of Belial," meaning "man of no worth," suggested to Milton the use of this word as the name of one of the fallen angels.

**bellman.** Formerly a watchman who went about a town at night, ringing a bell, warning the inhabitants to beware of fire, and invoking their prayers for the unfortunate.

**benison.** (L. and F.) Blessing. This word is employed chiefly by poets.

**beryl.** (Gr.) A precious stone, one variety of which (called emerald) is of a sea-green color.

**bestead.** (A.S.) 1. To please advantageously. 2. To profit.

**blazon.** 1. To display. 2. To proclaim publicly. 3. To adorn.

**blear** (= blur). 1. *Of eyes*, to make inflamed. 2. *Of the intellect*, to confuse.

**bolt.** I. (A.S. = a narrow or a peg.) 1. To swallow food hastily or without mastication. 2. To throw forth or expel quickly. 3. To start forward or away quickly. 4. To fasten with a bolt.

II. (Ger. = to sift.) 1. To separate flour from bran. 2. To examine by sifting. 3. To present in a refined form.

**bosky.** (L.) Bushy.

**bourn.** (F. = limit.) A winding narrow valley with a rivulet, forming a natural land boundary.

**bout.** (Dan.) 1. A fold or twist. 2. A turn: *i.e.* as much of an action as is performed at one time. 3. A contest.

**budge.** 1. A kind of fur made of lambskin with the wool dressed outwards. Persons who had obtained a degree from a university formerly wore budge fur, as a sign of scholarly attainments. 2. Scholastic or severe in aspect.

**buskin.** 1. A boot covering the foot and the lower part of the leg, designed to protect against thorns, etc. 2. A similar boot with high soles, worn in ancient tragedies to give the actor an imposing appearance. The word is therefore used as symbolic of tragedy.

**buxom.** (A.S.) 1. Yielding, flexible. 2. Jolly, cheerful.

**cadence.** (L.) 1. The act of falling in *motion* or in *pitch of tone*. 2. Rhythmic flow of language. 3. Regular pace in marching.

**Cambuscan.** A character in Chaucer's *Squier's Tale*. He was king of Tartary, and had two sons, Algarsif and Camballo, and one daughter, Canace. One day, while the king was celebrating his birthday festivities in his palace, a strange knight appeared, riding upon a brazen steed, holding in his hand a mirror of glass, and wearing upon his thumb a ring of gold. He announced that the wondrous horse (which had the power to bear his rider upon earth or in the air over whatever space in a day the rider willed) was a present from the king of Arabia and India to Cambuscan. The mirror (in which its possessor could read whatever adversity threatened him) and the ring (which conferred the power to interpret the song of birds, and to perceive the mystic properties of all healing herbs) were given to Canace. As the tale was left incomplete, it is not known "who had Canace to wife."

**canker.** (L.) 1. A corroding ulceration. 2. Anything that eats away like (1), *e.g.* rust. 3. A worm that devours plants.

**canon.** (Gr. = a straight rod.) 1. A rule. 2. A rule in ecclesiastical matters, especially a rule for the government of the members of a monastery or other religious body. 3. An official of a certain rank in the Church of England.

**career.** 1. A term of chivalry, applied to a friendly tilt with lances, as opposed to a mortal combat. 2. To move rapidly.

**cassia.** An aromatic plant mentioned in the Bible.

**cast.** 1. Throw. 2. Compute. 3. Predict by foresight or by divination. 4. Plan.

**cell.** (L. = the holiest part of a temple.) 1. A small apartment inhabited by a religious devotee. 2. A compartment, or any hollow place.



**centre.** 1. The middle point of anything. 2. The Earth (as the centre of the World).

**champaign.** (F.) Flat, open country.

**change.** 1. Alteration. 2. A figure in a masque or a dance.

**charácter.** (L.) 1. To engrave. 2. To describe.

**chimæra.** (Gr.) 1. A fabulous fire-breathing monster, with lion's head, goat's body, and serpent's tail. 2. Any foolish and unreal creation of the imagination.

**chivalry.** (Fr.) 1. Cavalry. 2. A body of knights.

**Cimmeria.** A region of total darkness, supposed by Homer to exist at the edge of the earth's disk, beyond the ocean's stream (see 22). Through it lay one route to the lower world.

**clear.** (L.) 1. Bright or distinct. 2. Noble.

**close.** (L.) 1. Confined. 2. Secret. 3. Dense. 4. Near.

**clout.** (A.S.) 1. A small piece of cloth. 2. A patch. 3. A blow on the ear. 4. The central mark on a target.

**compeer.** (L. = equal with.) A comrade.

**composition.** (L.) 1. A body composed of several portions. 2. A settlement of differences.

**confine.** (L.) 1. Boundary. 2. To border upon.

**consort.** (L.) One who shares another's lot; e.g. a wife.

**Cotytto.** A Thracian goddess worshipped at night with revelry and licentious rites.

**crank.** 1. A turn or revolution. 2. A sportive use of a word, by twisting its form or meaning.

**croft.** (A.S.) 1. An enclosed field near a house. 2. A small farm.

**crude.** (L. = full of blood.) 1. Raw. 2. Immature, or lacking in finish.

**curb.** (Fr.) 1. A restraining strap in a harness. 2. Anything that restrains.

**curfew.** (Fr. = cover fire.) A bell formerly rung in England at eight o'clock P.M., by order of William the Conqueror, as a signal warning people to extinguish their fires and go to bed. The object was to guard against destructive fires at night. It is still rung at nine o'clock P.M. in a few localities, through adherence to tradition.

**cynic.** (Gr. = dog.) 1. Doglike. 2. Belonging to the sect of philosophers called Cynics. They taught severity of dress, manners,

and morals. The most noted Cynic was Diogenes, who scorned the luxury of a house, and lived in a tub.

**Cynosure.** (Gr. = dog's tail.) 1. The constellation of the Lesser Bear (see 12), used by mariners in guiding their ships. 2. Any object which commands attention.

**cypress.** Light, transparent lawn, like modern crape, either black or white in color.

**debonair.** (Fr.) Of good manners, agreeable.

**decent.** (L.) 1. Suitable. 2. Graceful. 3. Modest.

**dell.** (A.S.) A small narrow valley between hills.

**Demogorgon.** A much-dreaded demon, whose name, even, it was formerly deemed unsafe to utter. He was placed by Spenser in Chaos, but by Marlowe in the nether world.

**Deva.** A Latinized form of the name of the river Dee, on the northern boundary of Wales. It is called *ominous* and *hallowed* by the older writers, because of legends of mystic powers with which it was said to be endowed.

**dight.** (A.S.) 1. Arranged. 2. Dressed. 3. Ornamented.

**dingle.** (A form of the word "dimple.") A valley between steep hills.

**dint.** (A.S.) 1. A blow. 2. The mark resulting from a blow. 3. Force.

**dire.** (L.) Dreadful.

**discover.** 1. Uncover. 2. Reveal. 3. Explore.

**Doris.** A district in Greece inhabited by one of the three primitive Greek races. The Dorians expressed their simple, dignified, almost austere character in their music, literature, and architecture, both in Greece and in their colonies in Sicily, Italy, and Asia Minor. The early *pastoral* poets, Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, wrote in the Doric dialect.

**dragon.** (Gr. = seeing.) 1. A huge serpent in Greek mythology, represented as resembling a winged crocodile. 2. An emblematic expression in Revelation xxii. 2, for Satan.

**dryad.** (Gr.) A nymph of the woods (see 51).

**dun.** (A.S.) A color between brown and black.

**effulgence.** (L.) A flood of light, splendor.

**eglantine.** 1. The sweet-briar rose. 2. (Milton's "twisted eglantine" =) The woodbine, or the honeysuckle.

**element.** (L.) 1. One of the simplest parts of which a thing

consists. 2. A substance that cannot be decomposed into different substances. 3. One of the four imaginary principles of matter recognized by ancient philosophers (see 4). 4. That one of the elements which is necessary to the life of a being.

**elixir.** (Arab. = the essence.) 1. The philosopher's stone (see 6). 2. The liquor with which alchemists hoped to transmute metals. 3. The refined extract of anything.

**empyreal.** (Gr.) 1. Formed of pure fire or light (see 5). 2. Heavenly (see 73).

**emulation.** (L.) 1. Rivalry. 2. Envy.

**essence.** (L.) 1. The quality of an object which differentiates it from other objects. 2. The basal constituent substance which makes an object what it is. 3. A characteristic extract from some plant or drug. 4. A perfume.

**ether.** (Gr. = blaze.) 1. A form of matter supposed to exist above the air (see 5). 2. A medium of great elasticity and tenuity, pervading all space and serving to transmit light, heat, and other forms of vibratory energy.

**event.** (L. = outcome.) 1. That which happens. 2. The result of a course of action.

**exempt.** (L.) 1. Set apart. 2. Released from liability.

**exquisite.** (L. = seek out.) 1. Carefully selected. 2. Of excellent quality. 3. Not easily satisfied, fastidious. 4. Extreme.

**fallow.** (A.S. = reddish yellow.) Land ploughed but not sowed.

**fast** (O.E. = strongly, quickly) in the phrase "fast by" = close at hand.

**fell.** (O.E.) 1. Cruel. 2. Eager.

**firmament.** (L.) 1. An established basis or foundation. 2. A region of the air. The sky, conceived as a material arch, within which are the atmosphere and the clouds (see 9). 3. A technical name in ancient astronomy for the orb of the fixed stars (see 8, 9).

**flamen.** (L.) A priest consecrated to the service of a particular god, as Jupiter or Mars.

**fond.** (O.E.) 1. Foolish. 2. Over affectionate. 3. Loving.

**forfeit.** (L.) 1. A trespass. 2. A penalty.

**fraught.** (O.E.) Loaded, burdened.

**fret.** 1. (O.E. = adorn.) To ornament with raised lines. 2. (O.E. = devour.) To wear away by friction, to irritate.

**frieze.** 1. An ornamented band, lying between the architrave and the cornice of a building of the Greek type. 2. (From Friesland.) A coarse woollen cloth with shaggy nap.

**frounce.** (Fr.) 1. To wrinkle or curl up. 2. To adorn with frounces.

**gad.** To ramble, to straggle in growth.

**garish.** 1. Staring. 2. Gaudy.

**gaudy.** (L. = holiday.) 1. Gay, festive. 2. Showy.

**gear.** (A.S.) 1. Outfit. 2. Harness. 3. Property. 4. Matter in hand, business.

**genius.** (L.) 1. A spirit attendant upon a person, and affecting his destiny. 2. A spirit attached to a person, place, or thing by the laws of its existence, as the "Genius of a wood," "of Aladdin's lamp," etc. 3. The special power or quality possessed by a person in an extreme degree.

**glade.** (A.S. = shining.) A passage through a wood, open to light.

**gloze.** (A.S. = explain.) 1. To explain by comments. 2. To deceive by flattery.

**goblin.** (Ger.) A mischievous spirit.

**grain.** (L.) 1. A small dried insect, in appearance like a seed or barleycorn, furnishing a red dye. 2. A red dye; used by Milton as an equivalent for Tyrian purple, which was a red dye formerly made at Tyre from a certain shell-fish.

**gray-fly.** A parasitic insect, sometimes called "trumpet-fly," which attacks sheep with especial virulence.

**grisly.** (A.S.) Horrible-looking.

**gross.** (Fr.) 1. Large, coarse. 2. Unrefined. 3. Shameful.

**habit.** 1. Condition of the body. 2. Custom. 3. Apparel.

**hæmony.** (Gr. = blood-red.) A term invented by Milton as the name of a magic herb (perhaps because one name for Thesaly, the land of magic, was Hæmonia).

**halcyon.** Peaceful. Halcyone, daughter of Æolus (see 52), and her husband were transformed into kingfishers. It was fabled that they made their nest upon the surface of the sea, and for the space of fourteen days, while the mother brooded over her eggs, the sea remained in a state of charmed calm, although the breeding season came in midwinter (Dec. 21+).

**hale.** (A.S.) To drag, to haul.

**harbinger.** (A.S.) 1. One who announces the coming of a guest. 2. Especially, in England, an officer of the royal household, who preceded the monarch in his journeys, to provide for suitable entertainment. 3. A precursor.

**harrow.** (A.S.) 1. To draw an instrument with large teeth over soil in order to pulverize it. 2. To fill with distress, to lacerate.

**Hermes.** 1. A god of Greek mythology (see 53 and 7). 2. A celebrated Egyptian philosopher and king, called "Trismegistus" (thrice-great) because he had the state of a king, the wisdom of a philosopher, and the illumination of a priest. His writings are lost, although forged works bearing his name exist.

**Hesperus.** 1. A deity of Greek mythology (see 61). 2. A name for the evening star (see 14).

**hierarchy.** (Gr.) 1. Government in sacred matters. 2. A rank or order of sacred beings (see 72).

**hoar.** (A.S.) 1. White. 2. Gray with age, aged.

**hold.** A castle or stronghold.

**horrid.** (L.) 1. Bristling, rough. 2. Causing horror.

**hosanna.** (Heb. = save, I pray.) 1. A prayer employed by the Hebrews on feast days. 2. An acclamation in praise of God.

**hutch.** (Fr.) Hoard up.

**Hydra.** (Gr.) A monster, the offspring of Typhon (see 32), that infested the region about Lake Lerna, in the Peloponnesus. It had a hundred heads, and if one were cut off two sprang up in its place, unless the cut was immediately seared. Hercules destroyed the monster with the aid of Iolaus, and made use of the gall to tip his arrows with poison (see 60+).

**Iberia.** The Latin name for the territory now occupied by Spain.

**imblaze.** 1. Set on fire. 2. Adorn with glittering embellishments. 3. Adorn with figures of heraldry.

**immure.** (L.) 1. Enclose with walls. 2. Confine.

**impale.** (L.) 1. To transfix with a sharp stake. 2. To enclose with a paling, or fence of stakes.

**inclement.** (L.) 1. Unmerciful. 2. Stormy.

**ineffable.** (L.) Not capable of being expressed in words.

**infernal.** (L.) 1. Pertaining to the lower regions. 2. Fit for hell, diabolical.

**influence.** (L. = flowing into.) 1. A controlling force formerly



supposed to be exercised by the heavenly bodies upon the lives of men. It was also held to promote the formation of metals and minerals within the bowels of the earth. 2. Any power causing or modifying an action.

**instinct.** (L.) 1. Animated or impelled to action from within. 2. An inner force or stimulus.

**inure.** (M.E.) 1. Habituated by use. 2. Hardened.

**jocund.** (L.) Cheerful, pleasant.

**junket.** (It.) 1. A delicacy made of curds mixed with cream, sweetened and flavored. 2. Feasting, merrymaking.

**ken.** (A.S. = know.) 1. Knowledge. 2. Sight. 3. (As a verb.) To recognize from a distance.

**kirtle** (= a modification of "skirtle"). 1. An upper garment or jacket. 2. An outer petticoat or skirt.

**labyrinth.** (Gr.) A building containing an intricate and confusing series of passages.

**lank.** (A.S.) 1. Slender. 2. Relaxed, drooping. 3. Long and straight.

**lap.** Wrap, enfold.

**Lar.** (L.) 1. An Etruscan title, signifying Lord or King. 2. A divinity, domestic or public, generally the deified spirit of an ancestor or a king. The images of the household *lares* were set up at the fireplaces, and worshipped with offerings.

**lawn.** 1. An open space, bounded by woods. 2. A kind of cloth.

**Lemur.** (L.) A wicked spirit of the dead, who wanders at night to frighten the living, and must be propitiated at stated intervals with certain ceremonies.

**leviathan.** (Heb. = wreath.) A huge sea-monster, real or imaginary, which writhes its body into folds. The name has been applied to the whale, the crocodile, and the fabled sea-serpent.

**libbard.** A form of the word "leopard."

**lickerish.** (Ger.) 1. Dainty in regard to food. 2. Tempting. 3. Lascivious.

**limbec.** (Arab.) An old form of the word "alembic," which signifies a vessel or retort used by the alchemists for distilling liquids (see 6).

**Limbo.** (L. = border.) A region on the edge of Hell, recognized in scholastic theology. It was held to be the abode of such

spirits of the dead as were deserving neither of the pains of Hell nor of the joys of Heaven. Ariosto, an Italian poet (born 1474), located it in the moon.

**lime.** (A.S.) A viscous substance, used to smear upon twigs for the purpose of catching small birds; *birdlime*.

**list.** 1. (A.S. = lust.) Desire, please. 2. (A.S. = hear.) Listen.

**livery.** (Fr. = delivered.) 1. An allowance of food, etc., furnished to servants. 2. A distinctive dress worn by servants or officials.

**living.** 1. Alive. 2. Burning. 3. Vivid in color.

**lore.** (A.S.) That which may be learned, a lesson.

**lucent.** (L.) Shining, resplendent.

**madrigal.** (It.) 1. A pastoral poem of a few stanzas. It originated in Italy and thence spread to England. 2. A part-song for three to ten singers, popular in England during the sixteenth century.

**Mæonides.** A name applied to Homer, either because of his parentage (from Mæon), or because he was a native of Mæonia (= Lydia).

**malign.** (L.) Evilly disposed, harmful.

**mammon.** A Syrian word meaning riches.

**massy-proof** (= proof against a mass). Ponderous.

**Meander.** (Gr.) A sluggish stream of many windings, flowing between Lycia and Caria. Its name has become expressive of slow and aimless wandering.

**meet.** (A.S. = measure.) Fit, suitable, adapted.

**mickle.** (A.S.) Great, much.

**middle.** (A.S.) 1. Equally distant from two extremes. 2. Humble, ordinary. *The middle air* is one of three regions of the air recognized by ancient writers, the highest being warm and dry, the middle cold and cloudy, the lowest warm and moist.

**mince.** (Fr.) To chop or cut into small pieces. 2. To walk with affected elegance. 3. To state imperfectly.

**mitigate.** (L.) To render less severe.

**mode.** (L.) 1. A prevailing style or manner. 2. A name given to certain primitive musical scales, e.g. the Dorian, Lydian, and Phrygian modes. The Dorian was severe, and therefore suited to religious and martial music. It consisted of the intervals of the modern scale beginning and ending on D, without employing flats

or sharps. The Lydian was soft and pleasing in its effect, and was suited to the more voluptuous emotions. It was like the scale of F without the flatted B.

**Mona.** An ancient name for the island of Anglesea.

**Morpheus.** (Gr. = form.) The god of sleep and dreams, so called because sleep *fashions* images in the mind.

**morrice** (= Moorish). 1. A dance with castanets, etc., for one person, introduced into England from Spain. 2. A rustic out-of-door dance, popular in England in the spring and summer.

**mortal.** (L.) 1. Deadly, fatal. 2. Subject to death.

**mould.** 1. (A.S. = dust.) Earth, modified by animal and vegetable organisms. 2. (Lat. = measure.) A matrix to determine the form of a casting. 3. Form.

**Musæus.** A mythical Thracian poet.

**myriad.** (Gr.) A numberless multitude.

**Namancos.** An ancient town near Cape Finisterre.

**nard.** (Pers.) 1. An Oriental plant, called spikenard, whose flowers grow in clusters of spikes. 2. An ointment made from (1).

**nectar.** (Gr.) The drink of the gods, conferring immortality, beauty, and vigor upon the partaker.

**Nereid.** (Gr.) A nymph of the sea, one of the daughters of Nereus (see 50).

**nether.** (A.S.) Lower.

**nice.** 1. Fastidious, hard to please. 2. Foolish. 3. Scrupulous.

**night-foundered.** (Fr.) Swallowed up in darkness.

**Niphates.** A peak of Mount Taurus, in Asia Minor, lying north of Mesopotamia, and therefore in the land of Eden.

**noxious.** (L.) Extremely harmful.

**nymph.** (Gr. = bride.) 1. A lesser female deity in Greek mythology, inhabiting the earth or the water. 2. Any beautiful maiden.

**obdurate.** (L.) Hardened, unfeeling.

**oblivious.** (L.) Forgetful.

**obvious.** (L.) 1. Situated in front of anything. 2. Easily perceived.

**opacous.** (L.) Dark; impervious to light.

**opal.** (Gr.) A precious stone of varied and variable color.

**orb.** (L.) 1. A sphere. 2. The eye. 3. One of the heavenly

bodies. 4. One of the concentric spheres of the Ptolemaic system (see 8+).

**orient.** (L.) 1. Rising. 2. Eastern. 3. Brilliant.

**pall.** (L.) 1. A mantle. 2. A dark cloth used at a funeral to cover the coffin. 3. A robe of state.

**palmer.** A pilgrim who bears a palm in his hand, as a sign that his pilgrimage has included the Holy Land.

**Pan.** A rural divinity of flocks and herds; the god of nature, as it is exhibited in rural life. He is represented with the upper part of the body like that of a man, save for the short horns on the head, and the lower limbs like those of a goat. He carries the "pan-pipes," a musical instrument made of seven reeds of different lengths. In the age of Elizabeth his name was often applied to Christ, considered as the Good Shepherd.

**pensioner.** 1. One who receives a pension. 2. A member of the retinue of a dignitary.

**pert.** (Welsh.) 1. Sprightly, brisk. 2. Saucy.

**pester.** (L.) 1. Encumber. 2. Confine and crowd. 3. Harass.

**Philomel.** (Gr. = lover of melody.) The poetic name for the nightingale.

**pie'd.** (Fr. = like a magpie.) Marked with various colors.

**pinfold** (= pen-fold). A confined space for cattle.

**Plato.** One of the greatest Greek philosophers, especially noted for his treatment of the subject of the *immortality of the soul* and the *life of the spirit* as opposed to that of the senses. This is the subject of his dialogue called *Phædo*. Elsewhere he refers to incorporeal spirits called demons, which seem to correspond to the fabulous genii of human beings (see Genius). His followers, called Platonists, elaborated the idea of different classes of demons, dwelling in the four elements (see 4), and mediæval theology declared that these beings were fallen angels dispersed through the elements, and that they seduced men to worship them, some as idols, some as oracles, some as household gods, some as nymphs, etc.

**pledge.** 1. A guarantee. 2. Offspring.

**poize.** (Fr.) 1. Weigh, balance. 2. Lend weight to.

**pregnant.** (L. = previous to giving birth.) 1. (Of a person.) Bearing unborn young. 2. (Of inanimate things.) Productive.

**prevent.** (L.) 1. Go before. 2. Hinder.

**prone.** (L.) 1. Inclined forward, or face downward. 2. Disposed toward.

**proper.** (L.) 1. One's own ; peculiar to oneself. 2. Suitable.

**puissant.** (Fr.) Powerful.

**pulse.** (Gr.) A general name for leguminous plants, such as pease, beans, etc.

**purchase.** (Fr.) 1. Acquisition. 2. Plunder. 3. Something received in return for money.

**purpled.** (Fr.) Decorated with an ornamental border.

**purlieu.** (Fr.) 1. Land near a forest. 2. A neighborhood.

**purple.** (Gr.) Any shade from scarlet to dark violet. *Tyrian purple* and *royal purple* were both red (see Grain).

**quaint.** (Fr. = known.) 1. Notable. 2. Skilful, ingenious. 3. Curious because of its strangeness.

**quill.** An Elizabethan word for a reed pipe.

**quip.** "A short saying of a sharp wit."

**rapt.** (L.) 1. Carried away forcibly. 2. Filled with ecstasy. 3. Entirely absorbed or engrossed.

**rathe.** (A.S.) 1. Early. 2. Coming before others, or prematurely.

**rebeck.** (It.) A fiddle of two (later of three) strings. It was introduced by the Moors into England, where it was the parent of the viol.

**reck.** (A.S.) 1. To heed, to feel concerned about. 2. (Used impersonally.) It concerns.

**round.** (O.F.) A dance in which the performers are arranged in a circle.

**saffron.** (Arab.) 1. A species of crocus. 2. A dye made from (1). It is orange-red in color, but substances dyed with it have a rich yellow tint.

**sampler.** (L.) 1. A pattern. 2. A piece of fancy-sewed or embroidered work done by girls for practice.

**sapphire.** (Heb.) A precious stone of a transparent blue color.

**saw.** (A.S.) A proverb or maxim.

**scannel.** Thin-toned and harsh-sounding.

**shell.** (A.S.) 1. A hard covering of anything. 2. A musical instrument shaped like a tortoise-shell and resembling a lyre.

**shoon.** An old form for the plural of *shoe*.

**silly.** (A.S.) 1. Blessed, happy. 2. Innocent, harmless. 3. Simple, foolish.

**slope.** (A.S. = slip.) Oblique or slanting.



**sock.** (L.) A light shoe worn by actors in ancient comedy.

**sooth.** (A.S.) 1. True. 2. Pleasing.

**soundboard.** A resonant piece of wood, placed over the wind reservoir of an organ, whence the air is admitted to the pipes.

**sped.** Provided for.

**starve.** (A.S.) To die with hunger, or with cold.

**steep.** (A.S.) 1. Precipitous. 2. Lofty.

**stem.** 1. To dam or check a stream, as by the trunk of a tree.  
2. To make progress against a current.

**Stoic.** One of a sect of Greek philosophers founded by Zeno (340 + B.C.), and named from the "stoa" or *porch* where he taught. Its basal doctrine was that external goods, health, wealth, etc., are matters of indifference to the wise man, because virtuous action constitutes the only real blessedness.

**stole.** (L.) A flowing outer garment worn by women and used at times to conceal their features.

**stop.** A vent-hole in a wind instrument.

**Stygian.** An adjective much used by Milton to connote all the qualities characteristic of the lower world, such as darkness, repulsiveness, horror, etc.

**swage.** (L.) To alleviate, to ease.

**swain.** (Ger.) 1. A person engaged in husbandry or rustic duties. 2. A lover or rustic gallant.

**swart.** (A.S.) Black or dark-colored.

**swink.** (A.S.) To labor so as to become exhausted.

**swinge.** (A.S.) Lash.

**tale.** (A.S. = number.) 1. A count. 2. A number. 3. A narrative.

**tease.** (A.S.) 1. To separate the fibres of wool or flax (generally with a comb or card). 2. To raise the nap of cloth. 3. To vex.

**tell.** (A.S.) 1. Count. 2. Recount, narrate.

**tiar.** (Gr.) A head-dress, a diadem. Commonly spelled *tiara*.

**topaz.** (Gr.) A precious stone, yellowish green or blue in color.

**train.** (L. = draw.) 1. A snare or trap for an animal. 2. A series of persons or things. 3. A retinue.

**traverse.** (L. and Fr.) Crosswise, athwart.

**trick.** 1. Cheat. 2. Deck or adorn fantastically.

**trophy.** (Gr.) A memorial of a victory.

**twitch.** (A.S.) To draw or pull suddenly.

**uncouth.** (A.S. = not known.) 1. Unknown. 2. Strange.  
3. Awkward, odd.

**unsphere.** To remove a thing from the sphere in which it abides. Beings of different grades were supposed to inhabit the various spheres of the Ptolemaic system (see 8+).

**urchin.** 1. A hedgehog. 2. A mischievous spirit that takes at times the form of (1).

**viewless.** Invisible.

**virtue.** (L. = manliness.) 1. Valor. 2. Inherent power.  
3. Goodness. 4. An angel of high rank in the celestial hierarchy.

**votarist.** (L.) A person under a vow, a devotee.

**vow.** (L.) 1. A solemn promise to a deity. 2. A prayer.

**wain.** (A.S.) A chariot or wagon.

**wake.** (A.S.) 1. A vigil kept before a holiday. This vigil, originally devoted to religious exercises and meditation, became degraded into an occasion for merrymaking and revelry. Hence (2) a nocturnal festivity.

**warp.** (Swed.) 1. To cast. 2. To twist or bend an object out of its normal shape. 3. To tow a ship by a line attached to successive objects ahead. 4. To swerve from a straight line, to move with an undulating motion.

**wassail.** (A.S. = be hale.) 1. A salutation in drinking. 2. A liquor used at festivities, made of spiced and sweetened ale or wine.

**wattle.** To make a network of interwoven twigs.

**weed.** 1. (A.S. weod.) A troublesome plant. 2. (A.S. wæd.) A garment, a sober dress.

**welkin.** (A.S. = clouds.) The sky.

**welter.** (A.S.) 1. To roll about in a moist place, as in mud or in blood. 2. To rise and fall sluggishly.

**whist.** Hushed.

**wight.** (A.S.) 1. A creature. 2. A human being, a person.

**wind.** To give wind to wind the mouth, to blow.

**wind.** To move with bendings and turnings.

**wont.** (A.S. = dwell.) Accustomed.

**woof.** (A.S.) 1. The cross threads in cloth, as distinguished from the lengthwise threads, or warp. 2. Cloth.

**y-.** A prefix attached to the past participle of verbs in Middle English, as y-clad, y-rent.

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